DIRECTIONS

Prague

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VISIT…

Prague

DIRECTIONS

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Introduction to

Prague

Most people come to Prague because they've heard it's a beautiful place, and they're rarely disappointed. With some six hundred years of architecture virtually untouched by natural disaster or war, few other European capitals look as good. The city retains much of its medieval layout and its rich mantle of Baroque, Rococo and Art Nouveau buildings have successfully escaped the vanities and excesses of postwar redevelopment.

Physically, Prague may have weathered the twentieth century very well but it suffered in other ways. The city that produced the music of Dvořák and Smetana, the literature of Čapek and Kafka and modernist architecture to rival Bauhaus, was forced to endure a brutal Nazi occupation. Then for forty years, during the Communist period, the city lay hidden behind the Iron Curtain, seldom visited by Westerners. All that changed in the 1990s and

When to visit

Prague is now so popular that the streets around the main sights are jam-packed with tourists for much of the year. If you can, it's best to avoid the peak months of July and August, when temperatures soar above 30ºC, and you have to fight your way across the Charles Bridge. The best times to visit, in terms of weather, are May and September. The winter months can be very chilly in Prague, but if you don't mind the cold, the city does look good in the snow. Christmas and New Year are perfect: there are Christmas markets right across town, and plenty of mulled wine and hot punch to keep you warm.

▲ Cathedral door

nowadays, Prague is one of the most popular European city break destinations, with a highly developed tourist industry and a large expat population who, if nothing else, help to boost the city's nightlife.

The River Vltava winds its way through the heart of Prague, providing the city with its most enduring landmark, the Charles Bridge. Built during the city's medieval golden age, this stone bridge, with its parade of Baroque statuary, still forms the chief link between the old town and Prague's hilltop castle. The city is surprisingly compact, making it a great place to explore on foot, and despite the twisting matrix of streets, it's easy enough to find

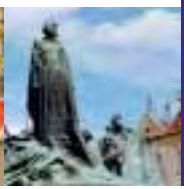
▼ Malá Strana, Charles Bridge and Staré Město

▼ Malostranské náměstí

your way around between the major landmarks. If you do use public transport, you'll find a picturesque tram network and a futuristic Soviet-built metro system that rivals most German cities. And, for the moment at least, it's still a relatively cheap destination, with food and perhaps, most famously beer, costing way below the EU average.

▼ Prague Castle by night

Prague
AT A GLANCE



PRAGUE CASTLE

The city's left bank is dominated by Prague Castle or Hrad, which contains the city's cathedral, the old royal palace and gardens, and a host of museums and galleries.

▲ Changing of the Guard, Prague Castle

MALÁ STRANA

Squeezed between Prague Castle and the river is the picturesque district of Malá Strana, with its twisting cobbled streets, Baroque palaces and secret walled gardens.

STARÉ MĚSTO

The medieval hub of the city, Staré Město – literally, the "Old Town" – is probably the most visited part of the city, and has a huge number of pubs, bars and restaurants packed into its labyrinthine layout.

▲ Staroměstské, Námĕstí and Staré Město

▶ Nerudoava, Malá Strana

JOSEFOV

Enclosed within the boundaries of Staré Město is the former Jewish quarter, Josefov. The ghetto walls have long since gone and the whole area was remodelled at the end of the nineteenth century, but six synagogues, a medieval cemetery and a town hall survive as powerful reminders of a community that has existed here for over a millennium.

NOVÉ MĚSTO

Nové Město, the city's commercial and business centre, is a large sprawling district that fans out from Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí), focus of the political upheavals of the modern-day republic.

VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

The fortress of Vyšehrad was one of the earliest points of settlement in Prague, whereas Vinohrady & Žižkov are rather grand late-nineteenth suburbs.

▶ National Theatre

HOLEŠOVICE

Another late nineteenth-century development, Holešovice is home

▶ Old Jewish cemetery, Josefov

▲ Turn-of-the-century mansions, Vinohrady

to Prague's impressive museum of modern art, the Veletržní Palace, and Výstaviště, its old-fashioned trade fair grounds.

HRADČANY

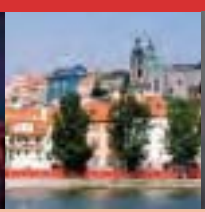
The district immediately outside the castle gates is a wonderfully quiet quarter filled with old palaces housing government ministries and embassies.

WENCESLAS SQUARE

More of a wide boulevard than a square, it was here that Czechs gathered in their thousands during the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

▲ Výstaviště, Holešovice

Ideas



The big six

You can have a great time in Prague just wandering the streets, wondering at the architecture, but there are six big sights you should definitely make the effort to see, no matter how short your visit. Few people miss Prague's medieval Charles Bridge and the picturesque Old Town Square, but it's also worth exploring Prague Castle, home to the city's cathedral, old royal palace and gardens; Josefov, Prague's former Jewish ghetto; the Art Nouveau Obecní dům; and Wenceslas Square, where the 1989 Velvet Revolution took place.

▲ Wenceslas Square

The modern hub of Prague, this sloping boulevard was the scene of the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

P.98 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Obecní dům

Café, bar, restaurant, exhibition space and concert hall, this Art Nouveau masterpiece is preserved exactly as built in 1911.

P.101 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▶ Old Town Square

The city's showpiece square, lined with exquisite Baroque facades and overlooked by the town hall's famous astronomical clock.

P.80 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Prague Castle

Towering over the city, the castle is the ultimate picture-postcard image of Prague.

P.51 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ Charles Bridge

Decorated with extravagant ecclesiastical statues, this medieval stone bridge is the city's most enduring monument.

P.75 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Josefov

The former Jewish ghetto contains no fewer than six synagogues, a town hall and a remarkable medieval cemetery.

P.91 ▸ JOSEFOV

Hotels

The food and drink may be cheap, but Prague is no budget destination when it comes to hotels. However, with so many ancient buildings to choose from, and more competition than ever among hoteliers, the city now has a good selection of places to stay, many of which have real character.

▲ U cerveného lva

A classic Prague hotel with original seventeenth-century wooden ceilings and tasteful antique furnishings, including rugs over parquet flooring.

P.136 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▲ Černý slon

A hotel offering simple rooms tucked away down an alleyway off the Old Town Square itself.

P.137 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Hotel Imperial

Plain, cheap, hostel-style rooms set in an otherwise extremely ornate 1914 Art Nouveau masterpiece.

P.139 ▸ NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Dům U velké boty

For attentive service and stylish antique décor, head for this discreet bolthole in the backstreets of Malá Strana.

P.136 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▶ U medvídků

If you're looking for unpretentious, inexpensive and centrally located rooms, try one of Prague's most authentic pubs.

P.137 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

◀ Cloister Inn

A former nunnery hidden in the backstreets of Staré Město.

P.137 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

Green Prague

Prague doesn't have a vast number of parks, but it does have a whole host of wonderful hidden Baroque gardens in Malá Strana, several of which are linked via terraces to the gardens around the castle. The largest green space in the centre is the Petřín hill, accessible via a funicular railway, and boasting great views over the city. Further afield, Vyšehrad's fortress and the woods of Stromovka are good places to lose the crowds in summer.

▼ Royal Gardens

Castle gardens famous for their disciplined crops of tulips.

P.57 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ Petřín

This wooded hill on Prague's left bank provides a spectacular viewpoint over the city.

P.71 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▲ Stromovka

Large leafy park laid out between Výstaviště and the chateau of Troja.

P.128 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

▼ Kampa

The chief park on the island of Kampa enjoys fine views across to Staré Město.

P.69 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▸ Vyšehrad

This old Habsburg military fortress is now a great escape from the busy city.

P.115 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

▲ Malá Strana terraced gardens

Pretty little Baroque gardens laid out on the terraced slopes below the castle.

P.68 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

Baroque Prague

The full force of the Counter-Reformation was brought to bear on the Czechs, who took to Protestantism en masse in the Renaissance. The legacy of this ideological battle can be seen in the city's enormous wealth of Baroque art and architecture: great Italianate domes dominate the skyline and melodramatic statuary peppers the streets – most famously, the Charles Bridge.

▼ Cathedral of sv Vít

The Tomb of St John of Nepomuk in the city's cathedral is the most spectacular reminder of the former power of the Jesuits.

P.53 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ Old Town Square

Probably the most impressive parade of Baroque facades and gables in all Prague.

P.80 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Charles Bridge statues

It's the (mostly) Baroque statues that make this medieval bridge so unforgettable.

P.75 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Klementinum

The Jesuits' former powerhouse still retains several Baroque masterpieces from the time.

P.79 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Strahov Monastery

Strahov boasts two monastic libraries with fantastically ornate bookshelves and colourful frescoes.

P.61 ▸ HRADČANY

▼ Loreto church

A sumptuous Baroque pilgrimage complex with frescoed cloisters, a Black Madonna, and a stunning array of reliquaries and monstrances.

P.61 ▸ HRADČANY

Restaurants

Czech cuisine is not the world's most revered, and the stuff that was produced by the country's chefs under the Communists didn't further the cause. However, Prague's restaurants have come a long way in fifteen years. You can now sample cuisines from around the world, from Afghan to Vietnamese, though it's still easier to eat in elegant surroundings than to eat truly memorable food.

▲ Mlýnec

Top-class food and a superb view over the Charles Bridge and the Castle.

P.88 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Kogo

Popular pasta and pizza place in Staré Město.

P.88 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Zahrada v opeře

Global cuisine beautifully presented at reasonable prices and served in the former stock exchange.

P.105 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▶ Pravda

Fashionable clientele, excellent service and an eclectic oriental menu.

P.89 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

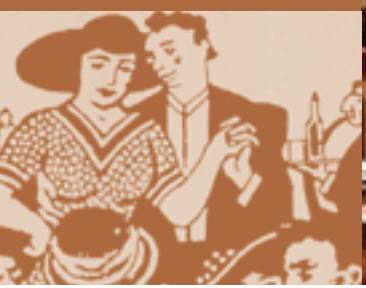
▼ View of Kampa Park

Fish and seafood restaurant exquisitely located by the river.

P.73 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

Cafés

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Prague boasted a café society to rival that of Vienna or Paris. A handful of these classic, ornate Habsburg-era haunts have survived, or been resurrected, and should definitely be sampled. In addition, Prague has a small number of teahouses (*čajovny*), a peculiarly Czech institution, with an equally long pedigree. These places range from smoke-free, zen-style havens to chill-out zones complete with hookahs. The tea-drinking is taken very seriously and there's usually a staggering array of leaves on offer.



▼ Café Louvre

First-floor café that roughly reproduces its illustrious 1902 predecessor.

P.112 ▸NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Obecní dům

Café décor doesn't come better than this Art Nouveau masterpiece.

P.101 ▸WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Bakeshop Diner

Specialist bakery where you can pick up a tasty sandwich, perch on a stool and read the papers.

P.73 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▶ Dahab

The most spacious and extravagant of the city's teahouses also serves tasty Middle Eastern snacks.

P.87 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Café Imperial

Great L-shaped Habsburg-era café decorated with spectacular ceramic tiling.

P.104 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Montmartre

Vaulted former haunt of the likes of Kafka, Werfel and Hašek.

P.87 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

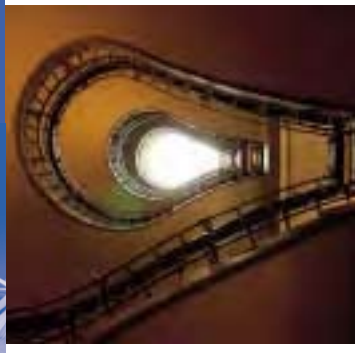
Museums and galleries

With so much glorious art and architecture on the streets of Prague, many visitors happily skip the city's museums and galleries in favour of the city itself. But it would be a shame not to sample what Prague's museums and galleries have to offer, from medieval art and internationally renowned Czech painters Krupka and Mucha, to the Czech Cubist movement and the Veletržní Palace, with its comprehensive overview of Czech and European art of the last two centuries.

▲ UPM

A treasure-trove of Czech applied art ranging from Meissen porcelain and Art Nouveau vases to avant-garde photography.

P.95 ▸ JOSEFOV



▲ Museum of Cubism

Czech artists, sculptors and architects were at the forefront of the Cubist movement.

P.84 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Museum Kampa

Private collection housed in a converted watermill and stuffed with works by František Kupka, among others.

P.70 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▼ Mucha Museum

Dedicated to Alfons Mucha, the Czech artist best known for his Parisian posters.

P.102 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Convent of St Agnes

Gothic convent that provides the perfect setting for the national collection of medieval art.

P.83 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Veletržní Palace

The city's premier modern art museum is housed in the functionalist Trade Fair Palace.

P.123 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

Churches

The two golden ages of church building in Prague were the late medieval and Baroque periods. The city's Gothic cathedral was begun in the reign of Charles IV in the fourteenth century, as was the Týn church, but like many of Prague's churches, both now have plenty of Baroque furnishings. To sample the high point of Prague Baroque, head for the Church of sv Mikuláš, built from scratch in the eighteenth century.

▲ Church of sv Mikuláš

The city's finest Baroque church, whose dome and tower dominate the skyline of Malá Strana.

P.66 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▼ Cathedral of sv Vít

Prague's cathedral stands in the middle of the castle and took centuries to complete.

P.51 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ Church of sv Jakub

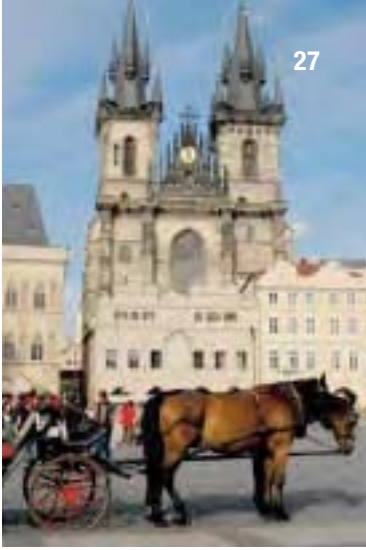
Colourful frescoes plastered over Gothic vaulting and the mother of all church organs.

P.83 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Church of sv Ignác

Ornate Jesuit church modelled on Il Gesù, their headquarters in Rome.

P.109 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO



▲ Týn church

Fairy-tale Gothic church whose twin towers rise up above the gables of Old Town Square.

P.82 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Panna Maria Vítězná

Home of the *Bambino di Praga*, the pint-sized wax effigy of Jesus that boasts a vast wardrobe.

P.70 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

Literary Prague

From Kafka and Rilke and the Good Soldier Švejk to Havel, the playwright-turned-president, Prague has a rich and unusual literary pedigree. The tourist industry may have flogged Kafka to death, and ruined Jaroslav Hašek's local, but there are still plenty of literary associations that have yet to be fully exploited.

▲ U zlatého tygra

Bohemian writer Bohumil Hrabal's local is still frequented by his old friends.

P.89 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▶ Old Royal Palace (Vladislav Hall)

It was here that absurdist playwright Václav Havel was sworn in as president.

P.53 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▲ Franz Kafka

Few cities are as closely associated with one writer as Prague is with Franz Kafka, who was born and spent most of his life in the city.

P.91 ▸ JOSEFOV

▼ Café Slavia

Immortalised in a poem by Nobel Prize–winner Jaroslav Seifert, this café is haunted by the ghosts of generations of Czech writers.

P.108 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Old-New Synagogue

The Golem, a sort of Jewish Frankenstein, reputedly still lives above the Old-New Synagogue.

P.92 ▸ JOSEFOV

Kids' Prague

Despite the lack of hands-on interactive attractions, most kids will love Prague, with its hilly cobbled streets and trams, especially in the summer when the place is positively alive with street performers and buskers. Prague Castle rarely disappoints either, with colourfully-clad guards and lots of fairy-tale ramparts and towers. The other obvious attractions for children are the Petřín hill, with its funicular and mirror maze; the zoo; and the National Technical Museum with its trains, planes and automobiles.

▲ Museum of Miniatures

Marvel at the smallest book in the world or the Lord's Prayer written on a human hair.

P.62 ▸ HRADČANY

▲ Petřín

This wooded hill gives kids a chance to run around, has fabulous views and an anti-quated mirror maze.

P.71 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▼ Ice cream at Cremeria Milano

Cheap Czech *zmrzlina* outlets stand aside, a real Italian *gelateria* has opened in Prague.

P.97 ▸ JOSEFOV

▲ Zoo

Prague zoo may be in need of some investment, but it won't disappoint the youngsters in your charge.

P.129 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

▶ Changing of the Guard

With a lilting modern fanfare and toytown soldiers, Prague's Changing of the Guard is funky like no other.

P.51 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▼ National Technical Museum

Among the veteran cars and bikes, you'll find the odd interactive display, not to mention a reconstructed coal mine.

P.125 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

Classical Prague

The Czechs have produced four top-drawer composers – Dvořák, Smetana, Janáček and Martinů – and although none hail from Prague, the legacy of their music still dominates the cultural scene here. Dvořák and Smetana both have museums dedicated to them and are buried in the illustrious Vyšehrad Cemetery. Prague is also rich in Mozart associations – after the success of *Figaro* here, the young composer went on to premiere two of his operas in the city's main opera house.

▲ Estates Theatre

The city's chief opera house has a glittering interior and many Mozart associations.

P.84 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Vyšehrad Cemetery

Resting place of just about every Czech writer, artist and musician of renown.

P.115 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

▶ Dvořák Museum

The most famous Czech composer of all time is commemorated in this delightful Baroque villa.

P.111 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Rudolfinum

One-time seat of the Czechoslovak Parliament, now home to the Czech Philharmonic.

P.95 ▸ JOSEFOV

▼ Obecní dům

This Art Nouveau concert hall is the main venue for the Prague Spring Festival.

P.101 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Prague State Opera

The 1888 former New German Theatre is now Prague's number two opera house.

P.105 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

Art Nouveau Prague

The emergence of Art Nouveau in Paris, with its curvaceous sculptural decoration and floral motifs, had an enormous impact on Prague's architects in the 1890s. Later, a more restrained, rectilinear style that prefigured early modernism, arrived via the Secession movement (*secesní*) in Vienna. And thanks to the lack of war damage and postwar redevelopment, virtually all of Prague's Art Nouveau treasures have remained intact.

▲ Obecní dům

Built in 1911 with the help of the leading Czech artists of the day, this is the city's finest Art Nouveau edifice.

P.101 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Jan Hus Monument

This gargantuan Art Nouveau monument forms the centrepiece of Old Town Square.

P.80 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Grand Hotel Evropa

A bit worn at the edges, the Evropa's café nevertheless retains its original 1905 décor.

P.104 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Praha hlavní nádraží

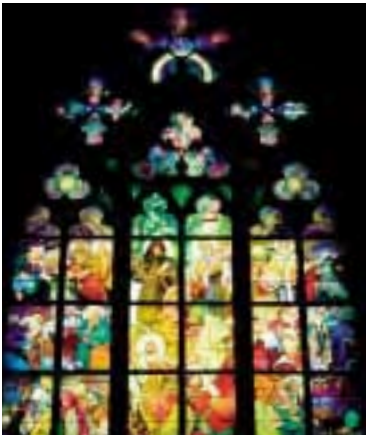
Fight your way through the subterranean modern station and you'll find Josef Fanta's glorious 1909 station more or les intact.

P.102 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ U Nováků

The facade of this former department store features bucolic mosaics by Jan Preisler.

P.108 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO



▶ Mucha window

The modern furnishings in Prague's cathedral include two stained-glass windows by Alfons Mucha.

P.51 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

Pubs

When it comes to beer consumption, Czechs top the world league table. This comes as little surprise, since the pub (*pivnice* or *hostinec*) is the country's primary social institution and beers like Budvar and Pilsner Urquell are considered among the finest in the world. The traditional *pivnice* is a simple place, with long tables and benches and waiters who bring a constant supply of mugs of frothing beer. Such places are becoming harder to find in Prague, but enough remain for a decent pub crawl.

▲ U kocoura

Old-established Malá Strana pub serving Budvar.

P.74 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▲ Pivovarský dům

Best of the city's new micro-breweries with a good range of traditional pub food.

P.113 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▶ U černého vola

A truly authentic unpretentious pub serving Velkopopovický kozel beer.

P.63 ▸ HRADČANY

▼ U medvídků

One of the few central pubs to have changed little over the decades.

P.89 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

◀ Letenský zámeček

Great summer terrace overlooking the city and river from Letná.

P.130 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

▼ U vystřelenýho oka

Archetypal smoky, hard-drinking Žižkov pub with unpronounceable name.

P.122 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

Shops and markets

Despite the presence of the familiar multinational franchises, Prague still abounds in small, one-off independent shops, even in the centre. The city's second-hand, antique, bric-a-brac or junk shops are always worth a browse: the terms to look out for are *starožitnosti*, *antikváriat*, *bazar* and, believe it or not, "second-hand". The country is famous for its crystal and glassware, as well as garnet and amber jewellery. Other popular souvenir choices include traditional wooden toys and marionettes.

▲ Moser

The country's leading crystal and glass manufacturer has its flagship store on Na příkopě.

P.103 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Christmas markets

Cute arts and crafts stalls occupy the city's main squares in the run-up to Christmas each year.

P.147 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Botanicus

Prague's own home-grown version of the Body Shop.

P.86 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Cellarius

By far the best selection of Czech wines in the capital.

P.103 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Kubista

Beautifully designed reproduction Czech Cubist pieces, primarily furniture and ceramics.

P.86 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Manufaktura

Chain store specialising in wooden and ceramic folk art with branches all across the city centre.

P.87 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

Communist Prague

Despite forty odd years of Communism, the regime left very few physical traces on the city. Understandably the Czechs themselves aren't keen on harking back to those times, either. Yet if you know where to look, there are several understated – and one or two ironic – memorials to the period. For example, the giant metronome on Letná, stands on the spot where the world's largest statue of Stalin once stood. And if you're still not sated, there's even a Museum of Communism, full of memorabilia.

▲ Kinský Palace

The 1948 Communist coup was declared on the palace balcony overlooking Old Town Square.

P.81 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▲ Letná

The world's largest statue of Stalin once kept guard over Prague from this spot.

P.125 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

▲ Jan Palach memorial

In 1969 on Wenceslas Square, Jan Palach set fire to himself in protest against the Soviet invasion.

P.89 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Museum of Communism

An enterprising museum that gives a glimpse into the country's Communist past.

P.101 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Národní třída

It was the confrontation between police and protesters on this street that sparked the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

P.106 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Míčovna

The Communist restorers of this Renaissance ball-games court left a discreet ideological stamp on their work.

P.58 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

Views from on high

With its hilltop castle, its skyline of dreaming spires and domes, its winding river and centuries of architecture untouched by disasters natural or unnatural, Prague is central Europe's most photogenic city. Climb up to the castle or walk across the Charles Bridge, and you'll be blessed with wonderful views. For the ultimate rooftop or hilltop vantage points, however, you need to head for one of these strategic locations.

▼ Letná

The best place for a view of the River Vltava and its many bridges.

P.125 ▸ HOLEŠOVICE

▼ Cathedral of sv Vít

The cathedral's south tower gives you a great view over the castle and beyond to the rest of Prague.

P.51 ▸ PRAGUE CASTLE

▲ Astronomical Tower, Klementinum

An unusual view over the rooftops of Staré Město.

P.79 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▼ Žižkov Tower

Prague's futuristic TV tower is the city's tallest structure and the ultimate viewpoint.

P.119 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

▲ Petřín

The best view from Petřín hill is from Prague's own miniature version of the Eiffel Tower.

P.71 ▸ MALÁ STRANA

▼ Staré Město Town Hall

Bird's-eye view of Prague's showpiece square and the crowds watching the astronomical clock.

P.81 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

Nightlife

Many of Prague's pubs, bars and music venues stay open very late, so after midnight you're not necessarily committed to a full-on club. If you do go clubbing, you'll find a fairly modest choice of places, split between techno and top twenty. If you're lucky, you'll be able to simply walk home; otherwise, you'll find night trams run every thirty to forty minutes in every direction from Lazarská.

▲ Radost FX

Long-established basement club, with a veggie café upstairs.

P.121 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

▲ Divadlo Archa

The most adventurous theatre in Prague, with everything from straight theatre to dance and live music.

P.105 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Roxy

City-centre dance club with its finger in all sorts of avant-garde pies.

P.90 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

▶ AghaRTA Jazz Centrum

Prague's best venue for jazz and blues is situated just off Wenceslas Square.

P.114 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Karlovy Lázně

A young multinational crowd head for this big riverside dance club laid out on four levels.

P.90 ▸ STARÉ MĚSTO

Twentieth-century architecture

Prague is renowned for its beautifully preserved Gothic, Baroque and Art Nouveau buildings. However, the city's twentieth-century architecture is less well known, but equally remarkable. The Czechs were the only ones to apply Cubism to buildings and later created a putative nationalist style – Rondo-Cubism. Their embrace of Functionalism in the interwar years drew praise from Le Corbusier himself, and today this legacy remains an important influence on the city's contemporary architecture.

▲ Cubist villas

The most successful application of architectural Cubism in Prague.

P.118 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY & ŽIŽKOV

▼ Baťa store

All prewar Baťa stores were designed along functionalist lines.

P.103 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Dancing House

Prague's most distinctive building from the 1990s.

P.110 ▸ NÁRODNÍ AND SOUTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▲ Cubist lamppost

Delightfully whimsical lamppost and seat hidden away in Jungmannovo náměstí.

P.106 ▸ HRADČANY

▶ Banka legií

The city's finest Rondo-Cubist building contains a great frieze featuring the Czechoslovak Legion.

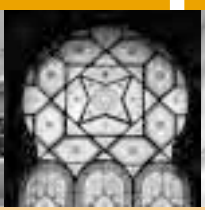
P.102 ▸ WENCESLAS SQUARE AND NORTHERN NOVÉ MĚSTO

▼ Plečník's church

A postmodern masterpiece by Slovene architect, Josip Plečník.

P.119 ▸ VYŠEHRAD, VINOHRADY AND ŽIŽKOV

Places



Prague Castle

Prague's skyline is dominated by the vast hilltop complex of Prague Castle (*Pražskýhrad*), which looks out over the city centre from the west bank of the River Vltava. There's been a royal seat here for over a millennium, and it continues to serve as headquarters of the Czech president, but the castle is also home to several of Prague's chief tourist attractions: the Gothic Cathedral of sv Vít, the late medieval Old Royal Palace, the diminutive and picturesque Golden Lane, and numerous museums and galleries. The best thing about the place, though, is that the public are free to roam around the atmospheric courtyards and take in the views from ramparts from early in the morning until late at night.

Cathedral of sv Vít

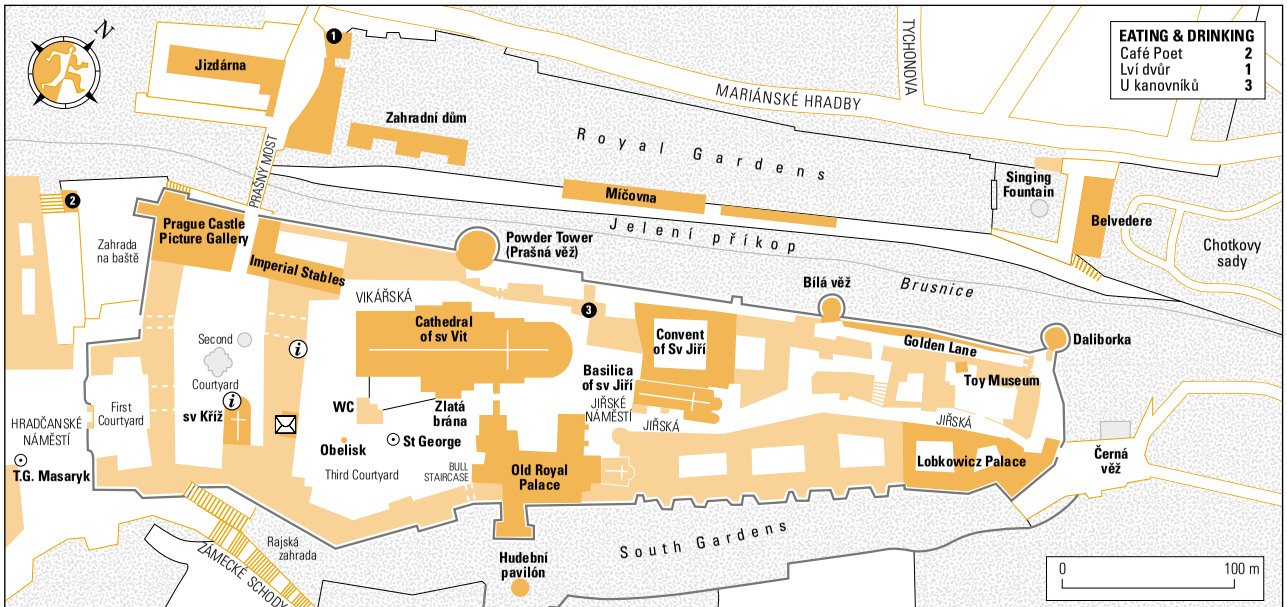
Daily: April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 9am–4 pm. Begun by Emperor Charles IV (1346–78), the cathedral has a long and chequered history that meant it wasn't finally completed until 1929. Once inside, it's difficult not to be impressed by the sheer height of the nave, and struck by the modern fixtures and fittings, especially the stained-

Visiting the castle

You're free to wander round the precincts of the castle (daily: April–Oct 5am–midnight; Nov–March 6am–11pm; ⓣ224 373 368, ⓦwww.hrad.cz). There are two main types of **multi-entry ticket** available for the sights within the castle: **Route A** (300Kč), which gives you entry to most of the sights within the castle apart from the art galleries: the choir, crypt and tower of the cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, the Basilica of sv Jiří, the Powder Tower and the Golden Lane; and **Route B** (220Kč), which only covers the cathedral, the Old Royal Palace and the Golden Lane. Castle tickets are available from the ticket office and information centre in the Chapel of sv Kříž, and elsewhere in the castle. The art collections of the Convent of Jiří and the Prague Castle Picture Gallery, the Toy Museum, the Lobkowicz Palace, and the exhibitions held in the Imperial Stables and Riding School, all have separate admission charges.

Most people **approach the castle** from Malostranská metro station, by taking the steep shortcut up the Staré zámecké schody, which brings you into the castle from the back. A better approach is up the more stately Zámecké schody, where you can stop and admire the view, before entering the castle via the main gates. From April to October, you might also consider coming up through Malá Strana's wonderful terraced gardens, which are connected to the castle gardens (see p.68). The alternative to all this climbing is to take tram #22 from Malostranská metro, which tackles a couple of hairpin bends before it deposits you at the Pražský hrad stop outside the Royal Gardens to the north of the castle.

The hourly **Changing of the Guard** is a fairly subdued affair, but every day at noon there's a much more elaborate parade, accompanied by a modern fanfare.


N
Jizdárna
Zahradní dům
PRAŠNÝ MOST
MARIÁNSKÉ HRADBY
TYCHONOVA
Royal Gardens
Míčovna
Singing Fountain
Belvedere
Chotkovy sady
Jelení příkop
Brusnice
Zahrada na baště
Prague Castle Picture Gallery
Imperial Stables
Powder Tower (Prašná věž)
Bílá věž
VIKÁŘSKÁ
Cathedral of sv Vit
Convent of Sv Jiří
Golden Lane
Daliborka
Toy Museum
Second Courtyard
First Courtyard
sv Kříž
WC
Zlatá brána
Basilica of sv Jiří
JIŠKÉ NÁMĚSTÍ
JIŠKÁ
HRADČANSKÉ NÁMĚSTÍ
T.G. Masaryk
Obelisk
St George
Third Courtyard
BULL STAIRCASE
Old Royal Palace
Lobkowicz Palace
Černá věž
Rajská zahrada
ZÁMECKÉ SCHODY
Hudební pavilón
South Gardens
EATING & DRINKING
Café Poet 2
Lví dvůr 1
U kanovníků 3
0
100 m

▲ BATTLING TITANS ON THE CASTLE GATES

glass windows, among them Alfons Mucha's superb *Cyril and Methodius* window, in the third chapel in the north wall, and František Bílek's wooden altar, in the north aisle.

Of the cathedral's numerous side chapels, the grand **Chapel of sv Václav** (better known as Wenceslas, of "Good King" fame), by the south door, is easily the main attraction. The country's patron saint was killed by his pagan brother, Boleslav the Cruel, who later repented, converted, and apparently transferred his brother's remains to this very spot. The chapel's gilded walls are inlaid with over a thousand semiprecious stones, set around ethereal fourteenth-century frescoes of the Passion; meanwhile the tragedy of Wenceslas unfolds above the cornice in sixteenth-century paintings.

The highlight of the chancel is the **Tomb of St John of Nepomuk**, a work of Baroque excess, sculpted in solid silver with free-flying angels holding up the heavy drapery of the baldachin. On the lid of the tomb, back-to-back with John himself, a cherub points to the martyr's severed tongue. Before you leave the chancel, check out the Habsburgs' sixteenth-century marble **Imperial Mausoleum**, in the centre of the choir, surrounded by a fine Renaissance grille. Below lies the claustrophobic **Royal Crypt**, resting place of emperors Charles IV and Rudolf II, plus various other Czech kings and queens.

In the summer months (April–Oct), you can climb the cathedral's **Great Tower** from the south aisle. Once outside, don't forget to clock the Golden Gate, above the south door, decorated with a remarkable fourteenth-century mosaic of the Last Judgement.

Old Royal Palace (Starý královský palác)

Daily: April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 9am–4pm. 140Kč. The Old Royal Palace is a sandwich of royal apartments, built one on top of the other by successive princes and kings of Bohemia, but left largely unfurnished and unused for the last three hundred years. Immediately past the antechamber is the bare

▲ CASTLE GUARDS

expanse of the Vladislav Hall, with its remarkable, sweeping rib-vaulting which forms floral patterns on the ceiling, the petals reaching almost to the floor. It was here that the early Bohemian kings were elected, and since 1918 every president has been sworn into office in the hall. From a staircase in the southwest corner, you can climb up to the Bohemian Chancellery, scene of Prague's second defenestration, when two Catholic governors appointed by Ferdinand I were thrown out of the window by a group of Protestant Bohemian noblemen in 1618. A quick canter down the Riders' Staircase will take you to the Gothic and Romanesque palace chambers containing "The Story of Prague Castle", a new exhibition on the development of the castle through the centuries.

▲ CATHEDRAL DOORS

Basilica of sv Jiří

Jiřské náměstí. Daily: April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 9am–4pm. 50Kč. Don't be fooled by the basilica's russet-red Baroque facade, which dominates the square; inside is Prague's most beautiful Romanesque building, meticulously scrubbed clean and restored to re-create something like the honey-coloured stone basilica that replaced the original tenth-century church in 1173. The double staircase to the chancel is a remarkably harmonious late Baroque addition and now

provides a perfect stage for chamber music concerts. The choir vault contains a rare early thirteenth-century painting of the New Jerusalem from Revelations while to the right of the chancel are sixteenth-century frescoes of the burial chapel of sv Ludmila, Bohemia's first Christian martyr and grandmother of St Wenceslas.

Convent of sv Jiří (Jiřský klášter)

Jiřské námestí Ⓦ www.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 50Kč.
Founded in 973, Bohemia's earliest monastery was closed down in 1782, and now houses an art gallery. The collection is of limited interest to the non-specialist, though it's always blissfully peaceful and crowd-free compared with the rest of the castle. The art collection begins upstairs with a brief taste of the overtly sensual and erotic Mannerist paintings that prevailed during the reign of Rudolf II (1576–1612), while the rest of the gallery is given over to a vast collection of Czech Baroque art, by the likes of Bohemia's Karel Škréta and Petr Brandl, and the great sculptors Matthias Bernhard Braun and Ferdinand Maximilian Brokof.

Golden Lane (Zlatá ulička)

Daily: April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 9am–4pm. 50Kč.
A seemingly blind alley of brightly coloured miniature cottages, Golden Lane is by far the most popular sight in the castle, and during the day, at least, the whole street is crammed with sightseers. Originally built in the sixteenth century for the 24 members of Rudolf II's castle guard, the lane allegedly takes its name from the goldsmiths who followed a century later. By the nineteenth century, the whole street had become a kind of palace slum, attracting artists and craftsmen, its two most famous inhabitants being Nobel Prize–winning poet Jaroslav Seifert, and Franz Kafka, who came here in the evenings to write short stories during a creative period in the winter of 1916.

Powder Tower (Prašná věž)

Vikářská. Daily: April–Oct 9am–5pm; Nov–March 9am–4pm. Also known as Mihulka after the lamprey (*mihule*), an eel-like fish supposedly bred here for royal consumption, the tower is actually more noteworthy as the place where Rudolf's team of alchemists were put to work trying to discover the secret of the philosopher's stone. Despite its colourful history, the exhibition currently on display

▲ BULL STAIRCASE

within the tower is rather dull, with just a pair of furry slippers and a hat belonging to Emperor Ferdinand I to get excited about.

Toy Museum (Muzeum hraček)

Jiřská 4. Daily 9.30am–5.30pm. 50Kč. With brief captions and unimaginative displays, this museum is a disappointing venture, which fails to live up to potential. The collection is certainly impressive in its range, containing everything from toy cars and motorbikes to robots and even Barbie dolls, but there are only a few buttons for younger kids to press, and unless you're really lost for something to do, or have a specialist interest in toys, you could happily skip the whole enterprise.

Lobkowicz Palace (Lobkovický palác)

Jiřská 3 Ⓜ www.nm.cz. Tues–Sun 9am–5pm. 40Kč. The palace houses a hotchpotch historical exhibition on several floors, though by no means all the objects on display deserve attention. Among the more interesting exhibits are copies of the Bohemian crown jewels and Petr Vok's splendid funereal shield, constructed out of wood covered with cloth shot through with gold, which hangs on the wall. The museum's prize possession is the sword of the famous Prague executioner, Jan Mydlář, who could lop a man's head off with just one chop, a skill he demonstrated on 24 of the 27 Protestant leaders who were executed on Staroměstské náměstí in 1621; Mydlář's invoice covering labour and expenses is displayed beside the sword.

▼ ST GEORGE SCULPTURE

South Gardens (Jižní zahrady)

April–Oct daily 10am–6pm. These gardens enjoy wonderful vistas over the city and link up with the terraced gardens of Malá Strana (see p.68). Originally laid out in the sixteenth century, but thoroughly remodelled in

▼ PLEČNIK'S GRANITE BASIN, SOUTH GARDENS

the 1920s, with the addition of an observation terrace and colonnaded pavilion, below which is an earlier eighteenth-century *Hudební pavilón* (Music Pavilion). Two sandstone obelisks further east record the arrival of the two Catholic councillors after their 1618 defenestration from the Royal Palace (see p.53).

Prague Castle Picture Gallery (Obrazárna pražského hradu)

Daily 10am–6pm. 100Kč.

The remnants of the imperial collection, begun by Emperor Rudolf II, are housed here. Among the collection's finest paintings is Rubens' richly coloured *Assembly of the Gods at Olympus*, an illusionist triple portrait of Rudolf, and his Habsburg predecessors, that's typical of the sort of tricksy work that appealed to the emperor. Elsewhere, there's an early, very beautiful *Young Woman at Her Toilet* by Titian, and Tintoretto's *Flagellation of Christ*, a late work in which the artist makes very effective and dramatic use of light.

Imperial Stables (Císařská konírna)

Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. The former Imperial Stables lie on the opposite side of the courtyard to the picture gallery and still boast their original, magnificent Renaissance vaulting dating from the reign of Rudolf II. They are now used to house the castle's most prestigious temporary art exhibitions (admission fees vary).

Royal Gardens (Královská zahrada)

April–Oct daily 10am–6pm.

Founded by Emperor Ferdinand I in 1530, the Royal Gardens are among the capital's most pristinely kept verdant green spaces, with fully functioning fountains and immaculately cropped lawns. It's a very popular spot, though more a place for admiring the azaleas

and almond trees than lounging around on the grass. Set into the south terrace – from which there are unrivalled views over to the cathedral – is the Renaissance ball-game court (Míčovna), occasionally open to the public for concerts and exhibitions. The walls are tattooed with sgraffito and feature a hammer and sickle to the side of one of the sandstone half-columns, thoughtfully added by restorers in the 1950s.

Belvedere

Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.

Prague's most celebrated Renaissance building is a delicately arcaded summerhouse topped by an inverted copper ship's hull, begun by Ferdinand I in 1538 for his wife, Anne (though she didn't live long enough to see it completed). The Belvedere's exterior walls are decorated by a series of lovely figural reliefs depicting scenes from mythology, while the interior is used for exhibitions by contemporary artists. In the palace's miniature formal garden is the so-called Singing Fountain, named for the musical sound the drops of water make when falling in the metal bowls below.

Cafés

Café Poet

Zahrada na baště. The best of the rather undistinguished castle cafés, tucked away by the northwestern ramparts, with tables on the outside terrace.

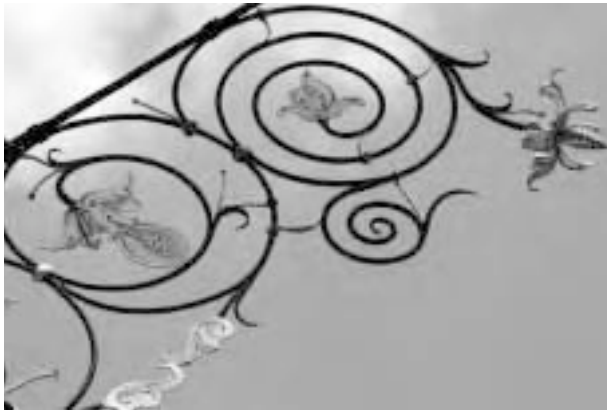
U kanovníků

Jiřské náměstí 35–36. If you can get a table, this café has good views overlooking the woody Stag Ditch, and is a good warm spot for a winter coffee stop.

Restaurants

Lví dvůr (Lion's Court)

U prašného mostu 6 ⓣ224 372 361, ⓦwww.lvidvur.cz. Housed in what used to be Rudolf II's private zoo, with a terrace overlooking the Royal Gardens and the cathedral, this smart restaurant serves up roast hog and plenty of other Czech specialities with main dishes from 250Kč.



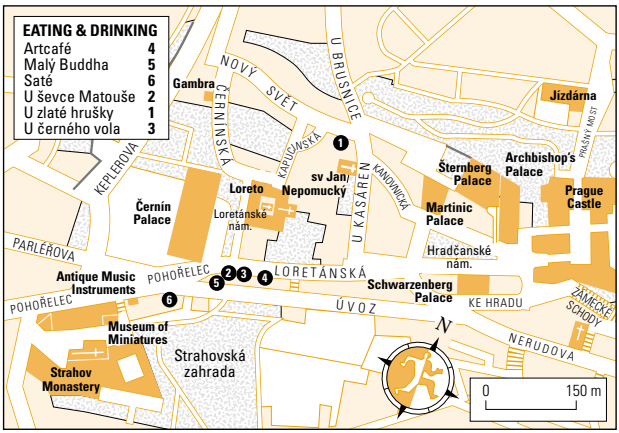
▲ FILIGREE IRONWORK ON THE BELVEDERE

Hradčany

The monumental scale and appearance of Hradčany – the district immediately outside Prague's castle – is a direct result of the great fire of 1541, which destroyed the small-scale medieval houses that once stood here and allowed the Habsburg nobility to transform Hradčany into the grand architectural showpiece it still is. Nowadays, despite the steady stream of tourists en route to the castle, it's also one of the most peaceful parts of central Prague, barely disturbed by the civil servants who work in the area's numerous ministries and embassies. The three top sights to head for are the Šternberg Palace, with its modest collection of Old Masters, the Baroque pilgrimage church of Loreto and the ornate libraries of the Strahov monastery.

Hradčanské náměstí

Hradčanské náměstí fans out from the castle gates, surrounded by the oversized palaces of the old Catholic nobility. The one spot everyone heads for is the ramparts in the southeastern corner, which allow an unrivalled view over the red rooftops of Malá Strana, and beyond. Few people make use of the square's central green patch, which is heralded by a wonderful giant green wrought-iron lamppost from the 1860s, and, behind it, a Baroque plague column. The most noteworthy palaces on the square are the Schwarzenberg Palace, at no. 2, with its over-the-top sgraffito decoration; the sumptuous, vanilla-coloured Rococo Archbishop's Palace, opposite; and the Martinic Palace, at no. 8 in the far northwestern



corner of the square, whose sgraffito exterior features, among other scenes, Potiphah's wife trying to tempt young Joseph.

Šternberg Palace

Hradčanské náměstí 15 ☎233 090 570, ⓦwww.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 60Kč. This elegant early eighteenth-century palace is now used as an art gallery housing European Old Masters from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. It's a modest collection in comparison with those of other major European capitals, though the handful of masterpieces makes a visit here worthwhile, and there's an elegant café in the courtyard.

The highlights of the first floor include Dieric Bouts' *Lamentation*, a complex composition crowded with figures in medieval garb, the bizarre *Well of Life*, painted around 1500 by an unknown artist, and Jan Gossaert's eye-catching *St Luke Drawing the Virgin*, an exercise in architectural geometry and perspective. The section ends with a series of canvases by the Brueghel family; before you head upstairs though, don't miss the side rooms containing Orthodox icons from Venice, the Balkans and Russia.

The second floor contains one of the most prized paintings in the whole collection, the *Feast of the Rosary* by Albrecht Dürer, one of Rudolf II's most prized acquisitions, which he had transported on foot across the Alps to Prague. There are other outstanding works here, too: two richly coloured Bronzino portraits, a Rembrandt, a Canaletto of the Thames, a whole series by the Saxon master, Lucas Cranach – including the striking, almost minimalist *Portrait of an Old Man* – and a mesmerizing *Praying Christ* by El Greco.

Černín Palace

Loretánské náměstí 5 ⓦwww.czechembassy.org. Loretánské náměstí is dominated by the phenomenal 135-metre-long facade of the Černín Palace (closed to the public), decorated with thirty Palladian half-columns and supported by a swathe of diamond-pointed rustication. Begun in the 1660s, the building nearly bankrupted future generations of Černíns, who were eventually forced to sell the palace to the Austrian state in 1851, which converted it into military barracks.

Since 1918, the palace has housed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and during World War II it was, for a while, the Nazi Reichsprotektor's residence. On March 10, 1948, it was the scene of Prague's third – and most widely mourned – defenestration. Only days after the Communist coup, Jan Masaryk, the only son of the founder of

▼ČERNÍN PALACE

▲ VIEW FROM STRAHOV MONASTERY

Czechoslovakia, and the last non-Communist in the cabinet, plunged to his death from the top-floor bathroom window of the palace. Whether it was suicide (he had been suffering from bouts of depression, partly induced by the country's political path) or murder will probably never be satisfactorily resolved, but for most people Masaryk's death cast a dark shadow over the newly established regime.

Loreto

Loretánské náměstí 7 ⓣ220 516 740, ⓦwww.loreta.cz. Tues–Sun 9am–12.15pm & 1–4.30pm. 90Kč.

The outer casing of the Loreto church was built in the early part of the eighteenth century – all hot flourishes and Baroque twirls, topped by a belltower that clanks out the hymn *We Greet Thee a Thousand Times* on its 27 Dutch bells. The focus of the pilgrimage complex is the Santa Casa (a mock-up of Mary's home in Nazareth), built in 1626 and smothered in a rich mantle of stucco depicting the building's miraculous transportation from the Holy Land. Pride of place within is given to a limewood statue of the Black Madonna and Child, encased in silver. Behind the Santa Casa, the much larger Church of the Nativity has a high cherub count, plenty of Baroque gilding and a lovely organ replete with music-making angels and putti. You can get some idea of the Loreto's serious financial backing in the church's treasury, whose master exhibit is a tasteless Viennese silver monstrance, studded with diamonds taken from the wedding dress of Countess Kolovrat, who made the Loreto sole heir to her fortune.

Strahov Monastery

Strahovské nadvoří 1 ⓦwww.strahovmonastery.cz. Libraries: daily 9am–noon & 1–5pm. 60Kč. Gallery: Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 12.30–5pm. 40Kč.

Founded in 1140 by the Premonstratensian order, the Baroque entrance to the Strahov Monastery is topped by a statue of its founder St Norbert, whose relics were brought here in 1627. The twelfth-century monastery church was remodelled in Baroque times

▲ WROUGHT-IRON LAMP POST, HRADČANSKE NÁMĚSTÍ

and is well worth a peek for its colourful frescoes relating to St Norbert's life.

It's the monastery's two ornate Baroque libraries though, that are the real reason for visiting Strahov. The Philosophical Hall has walnut bookcases so tall they almost touch the frescoes on the library's lofty ceiling, while the paintings on the low-ceilinged Theological Hall are framed by wedding-cake-style stuccowork.

The monastery's collection of religious art, church plate and reliquaries is displayed in the Strahov Gallery above the cloisters, and contains one or two gems: a portrait of Emperor Rudolf II by his court painter, Hans von Aachen, plus a superb portrait of Rembrandt's elderly mother by Gerrit Dou.

Museum of Miniatures

Strahovské nadvoří 11 ☎233 352 371. Daily 9am–5pm. 40Kč. The monastery's most unusual attraction is set in the northeastern corner of the main courtyard. Displayed in this small museum are forty or so works by Anatoly Konyenko, a Russian who holds the record for constructing the smallest book in the world, a thirty-page edition of Chekhov's *Chameleon*. Among the other miracles of miniature manufacture are a (real, though dead) flea bearing golden horseshoes, scissors, and a key and lock; the Lord's Prayer written on a human hair; and a caravan of camels passing through the eye of a needle.

Shops

Antique Music Instruments

Pohořelec 9. More than just old violins, this place also sells icons,

▲ OUTDOOR TABLES

Art Nouveau glass, clocks and model trains – for a price, of course.

Gambra

Černínská 5. March–Oct Wed–Sun only; Nov–Feb Sat & Sun only. The commercial gallery of Prague's small but dogged Surrealist movement, past and present, also provides a window for the works of animator extraordinaire, Jan Švankmajer, and his wife, the artist Eva Švankmajerová, who live nearby.

Cafés

Artcafé

Loretánská náměstí 23. Situated in the arcades south of Loretanské náměstí serving excellent croissants, cakes, strudels, baguettes and sandwiches, and very good coffee.

Malý Buddha

Úvoz 46. Closed Mon. Typical Prague teahouse decor, with a Buddhist altar in one corner and good vegetarian Vietnamese snacks on the menu. A very useful smoke-free Hradčany haven.

Restaurants

Saté

Pohořelec 3 ⓣ220 514 552. Simple, inexpensive veggie and non-veggie noodle and saté dishes with a vaguely Indonesian bent for around 100Kč.

U ševce Matouše (The Cobbler Matouš)

Loretánské náměstí 4 ⓣ220 514 536. The in-house cobbler may have gone, but the house speciality of steak (or fish) and chips for under 200Kč is still as good as ever, making it one of the few decent places to eat in Hradčany.

U zlaté hrušky (The Golden Pear)

Nový svět 3 ⓣ220 514 778, ⓦwww.zlatahruska.cz. Hidden away in the picturesque backstreets of Hradčany, this is a good, smart, traditional restaurant in which to while away an evening. The cuisine is solidly Czech, duck features heavily on the menu, and main dishes come in at just under 500Kč.

Pubs

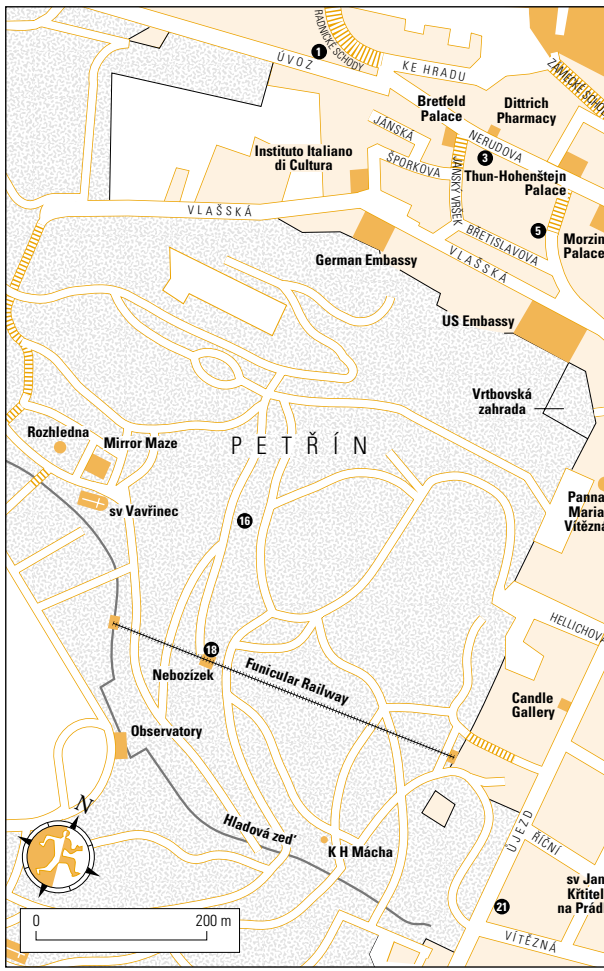
U černého vola (The Black Ox)

Loretánské náměstí 1. Great, traditional Prague pub doing a brisk business providing the popular light beer Velkopopovický kozel in huge quantities to thirsty local workers, soaked up with a few classic pub snacks.

▼ ARCADES ON POHOŘELEC

Malá Strana

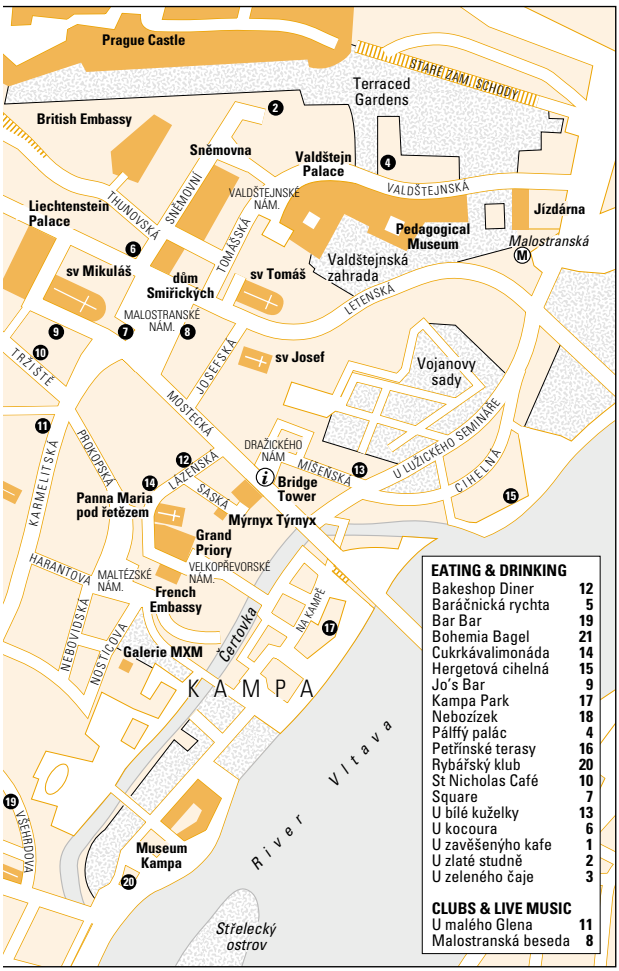
Malá Strana, Prague's picturesque "Little Quarter", sits below the castle and is, in many ways, the city's most entrancing area. Its peaceful, often hilly, cobbled backstreets have changed very little since Mozart walked them during his frequent visits to Prague between 1787 and 1791. They conceal a whole host



of quiet terraced gardens, as well as the wooded Petřín Hill, which together provide the perfect inner-city escape in the summer months. The Church of sv Mikuláš, by far the finest Baroque church in Prague, and the Museum Kampa, with its unrivalled collection of works by František Kupka, are the two major sights.

Malostranské náměstí

Malostranské náměstí, Malá Strana's main square, is dominated and divided in two by the Baroque church of sv Mikuláš (see p.66). Trams and



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▲ TRAMS ON MALOSTRANSKÉ NÁMĚSTÍ

cars wind their way across the cobbles below the church, regularly dodged by a procession of people – some heading up the hill to the castle, others pausing at one of the numerous bars and restaurants hidden in the square's arcades and Gothic vaults. On the square's north side at no. 18, distinguished by its two little turrets and rather shocking pistachio and vanilla colour scheme, is the dům Smiřických, where, in 1618, the Protestant posse met to decide how to get rid of Emperor Ferdinand's Catholic councillors: whether to attack them with daggers, or, as they eventually attempted, to kill them by chucking them out of the window (see p.54) of the Old Royal Palace. Sněmovní, the side street which runs alongside the palace's western facade, takes its name from the Sněmovna, the Neoclassical palace at no. 4, which served as the provincial Diet in the nineteenth century, the National Assembly of the First Republic in 1918, the Czech National Council after federalization in 1968, and, since 1993, as home to the Chamber of Deputies, the (more important) lower house of the Czech parliament.

Church of sv Mikuláš

Malostranské náměstí. Daily 9am–4pm. 50Kč. Towering over the whole of Malá Strana is the Baroque church of sv Mikuláš (St Nicholas), whose giant green dome and tower are among the most characteristic landmarks on Prague's left bank. Built by the Jesuits in the early eighteenth century, it was their most ambitious project yet in Bohemia, and the ultimate symbol of their stranglehold on the country. Nothing about the relatively plain west facade prepares you for the overwhelming High Baroque interior. The vast fresco in the nave portrays some of the more fanciful miraculous feats of St Nicholas. The dome at the east end of the church is even more impressive, thanks, more than anything, to its sheer height. Leering over you as you gaze up at the dome are four terrifyingly oversized and stern Church Fathers, one of whom brandishes a gilded thunderbolt, leaving no doubt as to the gravity of the Jesuit message. In the summer, it's possible to

▲ HOUSE SIGN ON NERUDOVA

20Kč. The old pharmacy, U zlatého lva (The Golden Lion), dating from 1821, has been restored to its former glory and now houses a small and mildly diverting exhibition whose prize exhibits are its leech bottles and a large, dried fruit fish.

climb the belfry (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm), for fine views over Malá Strana and the Charles Bridge.

Nerudova

The most important of the cobbled streets leading up to the castle is Nerudova. Historically, this was the city's main quarter for craftsmen, artisans and artists, though the shops and restaurants that line Nerudova now are mostly predictably and shamelessly aimed at tourists heading for the castle. Many of the houses that line the street retain their medieval barn doors and their own peculiar pictorial house signs. One of Nerudova's fancier buildings, at no. 5, is the Morzin Palace, now the Romanian Embassy, its doorway supported by two Moors (a pun on the owner's name). Meanwhile, two giant eagles hold up the portal of the Thun-Hohenštejn Palace, now the Italian Embassy. Further up the street, according to legend, Casanova and Mozart are said to have met up at a ball given by the aristocrat owners of no. 33, the Bretfeld Palace.

Dittrich Pharmacy

Nerudova 32. April–Sept Tues–Fri noon–6pm, Sat & Sun 11am–6pm; Oct–March Sat 11am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm.

Valdštejn Palace

Valdštejnské náměstí 4. Built in the 1620s for Albrecht von Waldstein, commander of the Imperial Catholic armies of the Thirty Years' War, the Valdštejn Palace was one of the first and largest Baroque palaces in the city. Nowadays, it houses, among other things, the Czech upper house, or Senát, which can be visited on a guided tour at weekends (Sat & Sun 10am–4pm; free).

Valdštejnská zahrada (Palace gardens)

April–Oct daily 10am–6pm. Free.

The palace's formal gardens, the Valdštejnská zahrada – accessible from the palace's main entrance, and also from a doorway in the palace walls along Letenská – are a good place to take a breather from the city streets. The gardens' focus is

▲ PHARMACY SIGN

a gigantic Italianate *sala terrena*, a monumental loggia decorated with frescoes of the Trojan Wars, which stands at the end of an avenue of sculptures. In addition, there are a number of peacocks, a pseudo grotto along the south wall, with quasi-stalactites and a small aviary.

Valdštejnská jízdárna

Valdštejnská 1 ⓣ257 073 136. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 100Kč.

The palace's former riding school has been converted into a gallery, which puts on temporary exhibitions of fine art and photography organized by the National Gallery. It is accessible from the courtyard of nearby Malostranská metro station.

Pedagogical Museum

ⓦwww.pmjak.cz. Tues–Sat 10am–12.30pm & 1–4.30pm.10Kč.

The former palace stables contain the Pedagogical Museum, a small and old-fashioned exhibition on Czech education and, in particular, the influential teachings of Jan Amos Komenský (1592–1670) – better known as John Comenius – whose educational methods were revolutionary for their time.

Terraced gardens

Valdštejnska. April–Oct daily 10am–6pm. 60Kč. One of the chief joys of Malá Strana is its series of Baroque terraced gardens, on the slopes below the castle where the royal vineyards used to be. Dotted with urns and statuary, they command superb views over Prague. From Valdštejnská, you enter via the Ledeburská zahrada, gardens which eventually connect higher up with the castle's own South Gardens (see p.56).

Vojanovy sady

U lužického semináře. Daily: April–Sept 8am–7pm; Oct–March 8am–5pm. Free.

Securely concealed behind a ring of high walls, the Vojanovy sady began life as a monastic garden belonging to the Carmelites. It's now an informal

▲ VIEW OVER MALÁ STRANA FROM THE TERRACED GARDENS

▲ MORZIN PALACE, NERUDOVA

public park, full of sleeping babies, weeping willows, and lots of grass on which to lounge about; the gardens also host the occasional outdoor art exhibition and concerts.

Maltézské náměstí

Maltézské náměstí is one of a number of delightful little squares between Karmelitská and the river. At its centre is a plague column, topped by a statue of St John the Baptist, but the square takes its name from the Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem (better known by their later title, the Maltese Knights), who in 1160 founded the nearby church of Panna Maria pod řetězem (St Mary below-the-chain), so called because it was the Knights' job to guard the Judith Bridge (predecessor to the Charles Bridge). Only two bulky Gothic towers are still standing and the apse is now thoroughly Baroque, but the nave remains unfinished and open to the elements.

John Lennon Wall

The Grand Priory of the Maltese Knights backs onto the pretty little square of Velkopřevorské náměstí, which echoes to the sound of music from the nearby Prague conservatoire. Following the violent death of John Lennon in 1980, Prague's youth established an ad hoc shrine smothered in graffiti tributes to the ex-Beatle along the Grand Priory's garden wall. The running battle between police and graffiti artists continued well into the 1990s, with the society of Maltese Knights taking an equally dim view of the mural, but a compromise has now been reached and the wall's scribblings legalized.

Kampa

Heading for Kampa, the largest of the Vltava's islands, with its cafés, old mills and serene riverside park, is the perfect way to escape the crowds. The island is separated from the left bank by Prague's "Little Venice", a thin strip of water called Certovka (Devil's Stream), which used to power several mill-wheels until the last one ceased to

▲ WATER WHEEL, ČERTOVKA

function in 1936. For much of its history, the island was the city's main wash-house area, a fact commemorated by the church of sv Jan Křtitel Na Prádle (St John-the-Baptist at the Cleaners) on Řícní. It wasn't until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the Nostitz family, who owned Kampa, began to develop the northern half of the island; the southern half was left untouched, and today is laid out as a public park, with riverside views across to Staré Město. To the north, the oval main square, Na Kampě, once a pottery market, is studded with slender acacia trees and cut through by the Charles Bridge, to which it is connected by a double flight of steps.

Museum Kampa

U Sovových mlýnů 2 ⓣ257 286 141, ⓦwww.museumkampa.cz. Daily 10am–6pm. 120Kč. Housed in an old riverside watermill, the museum is dedicated to the private art collection of Jan and Meda Mládek. As well as temporary exhibitions, this stylish modern gallery also exhibits the best of the Mládeks' collection, including a whole series of works by the Czech artist František Kupka, seen by many as the father of abstract art. These range from early Expressionist watercolours to transitional pastels like *Fauvist Chair* from 1910, and more abstract works, such as the seminal oil painting, *Cathedral and Study for Fugue in Two Colours*, from around 1912. The gallery also displays a good selection of Cubist and later interwar works by the sculptor Otto Gutfreund and a few collages by postwar surrealist Jiří Kolář.

Vrtbovská zahrada

Karmelitská 25 ⓦwww.vrtbovska.cz. April–Oct daily 10am–6pm. 20Kč. One of the most elusive of Malá Strana's many Baroque gardens, the Vrtbovská zahrada was founded on the site of the former vineyards of the Vrtbov Palace. Laid out on Tuscan-style terraces, dotted with ornamental urns and statues of the gods by Matthias Bernhard Braun, the gardens twist their way up the lower slopes of Petřín Hill to an observation terrace, from where there's a spectacular rooftop perspective on the city.

Church of Panna Maria Vítezná

Karmelitská 9 ⓦwww.karmel.at/prag-jesu. Mon–Sat 9.30am–5.30pm, Sun 1–5pm. Free. Surprisingly given its rather plain exterior, the church of Panna Maria Vítezná houses a high-kitsch wax effigy of the infant Jesus as a precocious three-year-old, enthroned in a glass case illuminated with strip-lights. Attributed with miraculous powers, the

Bambino di Praga (or Prazské Jezulátko), became an object of international pilgrimage and continues to attract visitors, as the multilingual prayer cards attest. He boasts a vast personal wardrobe of expensive swaddling clothes – approaching a hundred separate outfits at the last count – regularly changed by the Carmelite nuns. If you're keen to see some of these outfits, there's a small museum, up the spiral staircase in the south aisle, which contains his lacy camisoles, as well as a selection of his velvet and satin overgarments sent from all over the world.

Petřín

The hilly wooded slopes of Petřín, distinguished by a scaled-down version of the Eiffel Tower, make up the largest green space in the city centre. The tower is just one of several exhibits which survive from the 1891 Prague Exhibition, whose modest legacy also includes the hill's funicular railway (see below). At the top of the hill, it's possible to trace the southernmost perimeter wall of the old city, popularly known as the Hladová zeď (Hunger Wall). Instigated in the 1460s by Emperor Charles IV, it was much lauded at the time as a great public work which provided employment for the burgeoning ranks of the city's destitute (hence its name); in fact, much of the wall's construction was paid for by the expropriation of Jewish property.

▲ FUNICULAR RAILWAY UP PETŘÍN

Štefánikova hvězdárna

Petřín 205 Ⓣ 257 320 540, Ⓦ www.observatory.cz. Times vary. 20Kč.

The Hunger Wall runs southeast to Petřín's observatory, the Štefánikova hvězdárna, run by star-gazing enthusiasts. The small astronomical exhibition inside is hardly worth bothering with, but if it's a clear night, a quick peek through either of the observatory's two powerful telescopes is a treat.

Funicular railway

The funicular railway (*lanová dráha*) for Petřín sets off from a station just off Újezd and runs every 10–15min (daily 9.15am–8.45pm); public transport tickets and travel passes are valid.

The Nebozízek stop halfway up gives access to *Nebozízek* restaurant and *Petřínské terasy* pub (see p.74); the top station is closest to the Mirror Maze and look-out tower.

Rozhledna

Daily: April–Oct 10am–7pm; Nov–March 10am–5pm. Free. Petřín's most familiar landmark is the diminutive look-out tower or Rozhledna, an octagonal interpretation – though a mere fifth of the size – of the Eiffel Tower which shocked Paris in 1889, and a tribute to the city's strong cultural and political links with Paris at the time; the view from the public gallery is terrific in fine weather.

Mirror Maze (Bludiště)

Daily: April–Oct 10am–7pm; Nov–March 10am–5pm. Free. The Mirror Maze is housed in a mini neo-Gothic castle complete with mock drawbridge. As well as a mirror maze, there is an action-packed, life-sized diorama of the victory of Prague's students and Jews over the Swedes on the Charles Bridge in 1648. The humour of the convex and concave mirrors that lie beyond the diorama is so simple, it has both adults and kids giggling away.

Shops

Candle Gallery

Újezd 31 Ⓦwww.candle-gallery.com. Popular candlemakers selling every conceivable style and size of candle you can imagine, from "antique" and "meditative" to Mexican and Art Nouveau.

▲ GERMAN EMBASSY

Galerie MXM

Nosticova 6. Closed Mon. Prague's pioneering and highly influential commercial art gallery puts on consistently good shows by contemporary Czech artists in its one, small vaulted room.

Mýrnyx Týrnyx

Saská (off Lázeňská) Ⓦwww.myrnyxtyrnyx.cz. Tiny shop selling very funky, Czech designer gear and second-hand retro clothes and accessories, everything from hot pants to homburg hats.

Cafés

Bakeshop Diner

Lázeňská 16 www.bakeshoppraha.cz. Stylish modern diner decked out in light wood and political/avant-garde posters. Breakfasts, sandwiches, melts and salads for around 200Kč.

Bohemia Bagel

Újezd 16 www.bohemiabagel.cz. Self-service café popular with expats, serving filled bagels, all-day breakfasts, soup and chilli, with an Internet café attached.

Cukrkávalimonáda

Lázeňská 7. Very professional and well-run café, serving good brasserie-style dishes, as well as coffee and croissants, with tables overlooking the church of Panna Maria pod řetězem.

U zavěšenýho kafe (The Hanging Coffee)

Úvoz 6. The "hanging coffee" in question is one that has been paid for by the haves for the have-nots who drop in. That aside, this place is a pleasant, smoky cross-over café/pub, serving cheap beer and traditional Czech food.

U zeleného caje (The Green Tea)

Nerudova 19. Great little smoke-free stop-off for a pot of tea or a veggie snack en route to or from Prague Castle; the only problem is getting a place at one of the four tables.

Restaurants

Bar Bar

Všehrdova 17 257 312 246. Arty, but unpretentious cellar crêperie with big cheap salads, and delicious savoury and sweet crêpes (palacinky) on offer.

Hergetová Cihelná

Cihelná 2b 257 535 534, www.cihelna.com. Slick, smart restaurant, run by the Kampa Park family, specializing in tasty pizzas cooked in a wood-fired oven for around 250Kč. The riverside summer terrace overlooks Charles Bridge.

Kampa Park

Na Kampě 8b 257 532 685, www.kampapark.com. Pink building exquisitely located right by the Vltava on Kampa Island with a superb fish and seafood menu, top-class service and tables outside in summer. 500Kč or more for a main course.

Nebozízek (Little Auger)

Petřínské sady 411 257 515 329, www.nebozizek.cz. Situated at the halfway stop on the Petřín funicular. The view is superb, there's an oudoor terrace and a traditional Czech menu heavy with game dishes for 300–400 Kč.

Pálffy palác

Valdštejnská 14 257 530 522, www.palffy.cz. Grand candle-lit room on the first floor of the conservatoire, and a wonderful outdoor terrace from which you can survey the red rooftops of Malá Strana; the international menu, with main courses for 500Kč and upwards, doesn't quite live up to the setting though.

Rybářský klub

U sovových mlýnů 1 257 534 200. Freshwater fish – carp, catfish, eel, pike and others – simply prepared for under 250Kč, at this unpretentious riverside

restaurant, situated in the park on Kampa Island.

Square

Malostranské náměstí 5 ⓣ257 532 109, ⓦwww.squarerestaurant.cz. This once famous turn-of-the-century café has changed beyond all recognition – it's now a very smart and white bar and restaurant, which serves an imaginative and well-executed international menu: pasta dishes and salads for 200–300Kč, main courses for 400–500Kč.

U zlaté studně (Golden Well)

U zlaté studně 4 ⓣ257 533 322, ⓦwww.zlatastudna.cz. Former home of astronomer Tycho Brahe, accessible from the castle gardens and with the most fantastic views from the summer terrace, this hotel restaurant serves up classic Czech cuisine with all the frills – main dishes go for around 500Kč.

Pubs and bars

Baráčnická rychta

Na tržiště 23. A real survivor – a small backstreet Czech pub squeezed in between the embassies, with a cheap and filling menu.

Jo's Bar

Malostranské náměstí 7. The original expat/backpacker hang-out. Bottled beer only, Tex-Mex food served all day, and a heaving crowd guaranteed most evenings. Downstairs is the club *Jo's Garáž*.

Petřínské terasy

Seminářská zahrada 13. Superb views over Prague, beer and barbecues make this place very popular. To reach it, get off at the Nebozízek stop on the Petřín funicular, but walk in the opposite direction from the *Nebozízek* restaurant.

St Nicholas Café

Tržiště 10. Vaulted cellar café/bar that pulls in well-dressed Czechs and the diplomatic crowd in some numbers.

U bílé kuželky (The White Bowling Pin)

Míšeňská 12. Not a bad pub considering its touristy location right by the Charles Bridge; reasonably priced Pilsner Urquell, Czech pub food and the occasional accordionist.

U kocoura (The Cat)

Nerudova 2. One of the few traditional pubs left on a street once replete with them. Some of the best Budvar in town, plus the obvious Czech stomach-fillers.

Clubs and live music

Malostranská beseda

Malostranské náměstí 21. Ramshackle, inexpensive live music venue that attracts lots of Czechs, despite its location. The programme is a mixture of rock, roots and jazz. Gigs start at 8.30pm.

U malého Glena (Little Glenn's)

Karmelitská 23 ⓦwww.malyglen.cz. Smart-looking pub/jazz bar that attracts a fair mixture of Czechs and expats thanks to its better-than-average food and live music downstairs.

Staré Město

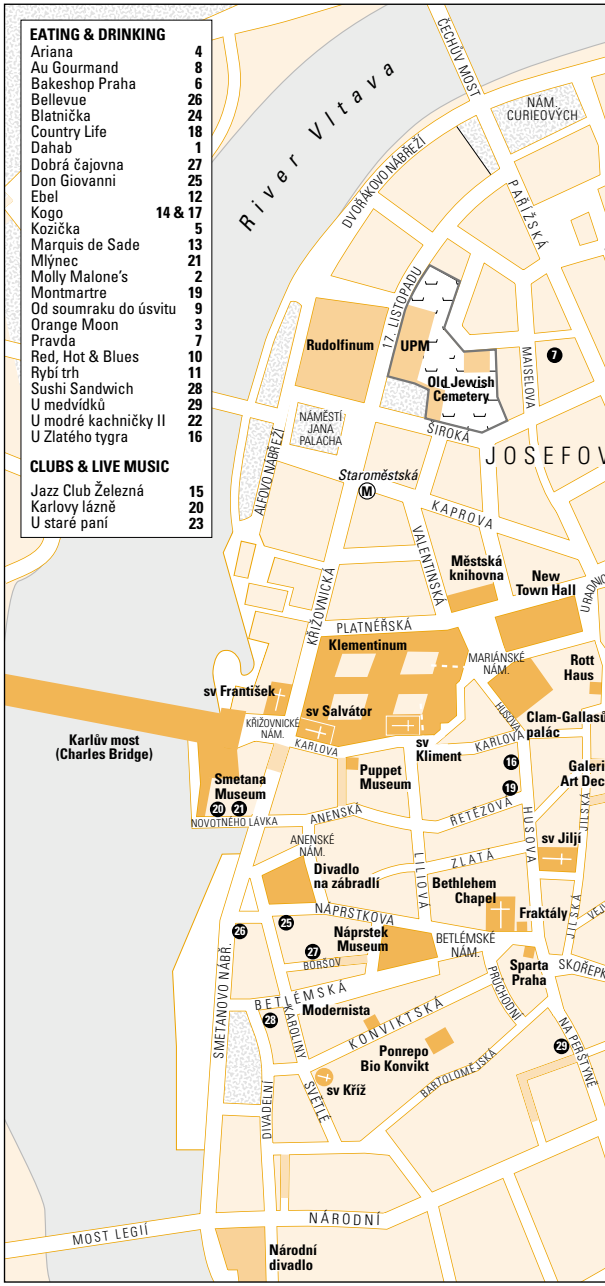
Staré Město – literally the "Old Town" – is Prague's most central, vital ingredient. The capital's busiest markets, shops, restaurants and pubs are in this area, and during the day a gaggle of shoppers and tourists fills its complex and utterly confusing web of narrow byways. Yet despite all the commercial activity, there are still plenty of residential streets, giving the area a lived-in feel that is rarely found in European city centres. At the heart of the district is the Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí), Prague's showpiece main square, easily the most magnificent in central Europe, and a great place to get your bearings before heading off into the labyrinthine backstreets.

Charles Bridge (Karlův most)

Bristling with statuary and crowded with people, the Charles Bridge is by far the city's most famous monument. Built in the fourteenth century by Charles IV, the bridge originally featured just a simple crucifix. The first sculpture wasn't added until 1683, when St John of Nepomuk appeared. His statue was such a propaganda success that the Catholic church authorities ordered another 21 to be erected between 1706 and 1714. Individually, only a few of the works are outstanding, but taken collectively, set against the backdrop of the Hrad, the effect is breathtaking.

The bridge is now one of the most popular places to hang out, day and night: the crush of sightseers never abates during the day, when the niches created by the bridge-piers are occupied by souvenir-hawkers and buskers, but at night things

▲ BUSKERS ON CHARLES BRIDGE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UPM
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ŠIROKÁ
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Staroměstská
ALŠOVO NÁBŘEŽÍ
KAPROVA
VALENTINSKÁ
Městská knihovna
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ÚDOLNICE
KŘIŽOVNICKÁ
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Rott Haus
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sv Salvátor
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Clam-Gallasův palác
KŘIŽOVNICKÉ NÁM.
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Karlův most (Charles Bridge)
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Ponrepo Bio Konvikt
NA PŘÍKOPĚ
BARTOLOMĚJSKÁ
sv Kříž
DIVADELNÍ
SVÍTELSKÁ
MOST LEGIÍ
NÁRODNÍ
Národní divadlo

Convent of St Agnes
U MILOSRDNÝCH
DUŠNÍ
BÍLKOVÁ
KOZÍ
ANENSKÁ
U OBECNÍHO DVORA
HAŠTALSKÉ NÁM.
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HAŠTALSKÁ
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Náměstí Republiky
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TÝNSKÁ
ŠTUPARTSKÁ
Hus Monument
STAROMĚSTSKÉ NÁM.
Týn Church
Obecní dům
Staré Město Town Hall
CELETNÁ
Museum of Czech Cubism
Prašná brána
MALÉ NÁM.
ŽELEZNÁ
KOŽNÁ
Karolinum
OVOCNÝ TRH
U zlaté koruny
Manufaktura
Country Life
Estates Theatre
NA PŘÍKOPĚ
NEKÁZANKA
MEZANTICHOVA
sv Havel
HAVÍŘSKÁ
Česká spořitelna
Sparkys
MICHALSKÁ
IDOVA
HAVELSKÁ
V KOTCÍCH
RYTÍŘSKÁ
NA MŮSTKU
Můstek
NOVÉ MĚSTO
PANSKÁ
UHELNÝ TRH
Wax Museum
PERLOVÁ
28. ŘÍJNA
sv Martin ve zdi
NÁRODNÍ
Tesco
Národní třída
JUNGMANNOVA
SPÁLENÁ
VÁCLAVSKÉ NÁMĚSTÍ (WENCESLAS SQUARE)
Můstek
VODIČKOVA
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100 m

calm down a bit, and the views are, if anything, even more spectacular.

You can climb both of the bridge's mighty Gothic gateways: the western one contains an exhibition (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; 30Kč) relaying the history of the towers, the bridge itself, and the story of St John of Nepomuk (who was thrown to his death from the bridge in 1393); the eastern one (daily: April–Oct 10am–7pm; Nov–March 10am–5pm; 30Kč) contains a small display of antique musical instruments; both allow you out onto their roofs for a bird's-eye view of the bridge.

Church of sv František z Assisi (St Francis of Assisi)

Built in the 1680s, the interior of the half-brick church is dominated by its huge dome, decorated with a vast fresco of *The Last Judgement* and rich marble furnishings. The Galerie Křižovníků (Tues–Sun 10am–1pm & 2–6pm; 40Kč), next door, houses the church treasury, which contains a stunning collection of silver and gold chalices, monstrances and reliquaries.

Church of sv Salvátor (St Saviour)

The facade of the church prickles with saintly statues which are lit up enticingly at night. Founded in 1593, it marks the beginning of the Jesuits' rise to power and is part of the Klementinum (see p.79). Like many Jesuit churches, its design copies that of the Gesù church in Rome; it's worth a quick look, if only for the frothy stucco plasterwork and delicate ironwork in its triple-naved interior.

Karlova

As the quickest route between the Charles Bridge and the Old Town Square, the narrow street of Karlova is usually packed with people, their attention divided between checking out the souvenir shops, and not losing their way. With Europop blaring from several shops, jesters' hats and puppets in abundance, and a strip club for good measure, the whole atmosphere can be a bit oppressive in the height of summer, and is in many ways better savoured at night.

Puppet Museum (Muzeum marionet)

Karlova 12 www.puppetart.com. Daily 10am–8pm. 100Kč. Despite the lack of information in either Czech or English, the museum, run by the international puppetry organization UNIMA, which has its headquarters here, has an impressive display of historic Czech puppets, both string and rod, mostly dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the most appealing figures are the wonderfully malevolent devils, and there's a great miniature theatre from 1933, complete with backcloth scenery changes.

▲ RABBI LÖW STATUE

Klementinum

April–Oct Mon–Fri 2–8pm, Sat & Sun 10am–8pm; Nov–March Sat & Sun 10am–8pm. 100Kč. As they stroll down Karlova, few people notice the former Jesuit College on the north side of the street, which covers an area second in size only to the Castle. The Habsburg family summoned the Jesuits to Prague in 1556 to help bolster the Catholic cause in Bohemia and put them in charge of the entire education system until their demise in 1773. The complex now belongs to the university and houses, among other things, the National Library.

Aside from the ornate Mirrored Chapel (Zrcadlová kaple), which is open only for concerts, the Klementinum's most easily accessible attractions are now open to the public on a thirty-minute guided tour (in English). The most spectacular sight is the Baroque Library, a long room lined with leather tomes, whose ceiling is decorated by one continuous illusionistic fresco praising secular wisdom, and whose wrought-iron gallery balustrade is held up by wooden barley-sugar columns. Upstairs, at roughly the centre of the Klementinum complex, is the Astronomical Tower, from which you can enjoy a superb view over the centre of Prague.

New Town Hall (Nová radnice)

Mariánské náměstí 2 www.prague-city.cz. The most striking features of the rather severe New Town Hall are the two gargantuan figures which stand guard at either corner. The one on the left, looking like Darth Vader, is the "Iron Knight", mascot of the armourers' guild; to the right is the caricatured sixteenth-century Jewish sage and scholar, Rabbi Löw. Löw was visited by Death on several occasions, but escaped his clutches until he reached the ripe old age of 97, when the Grim Reaper hid in a rose innocently given to him by his (in this case, naked) granddaughter.

▲ METRO SIGN

Malé náměstí

Malé náměstí was home to the city's first apothecary, opened by a Florentine in 1353, and the tradition is continued today by the pharmacy U zlaté koruny (The Golden Crown), at no. 13, which boasts chandeliers and a restored Baroque interior. The square's best-known building is the russet-red, neo-Renaissance Rott Haus, originally an ironmongers' shop founded by V.J. Rott in 1840, whose facade is smothered in agricultural scenes and motifs inspired by the Czech artist Mikuláš Aleš. At the centre of the square stands a (no longer functioning) fountain dating from 1560, which retains its beautiful, original wrought-iron canopy.

Staroměstské náměstí (Old Town Square)

Easily the most spectacular square in Prague, Staroměstské náměstí is the traditional heart of the city. Most of the brightly coloured houses look solidly eighteenth-century, but their Baroque facades hide considerably older buildings. Over the centuries, the square has seen its fair share of demonstrations and battles: the 27 white crosses set into the paving commemorate the Protestant leaders who were condemned to death on the orders of the Habsburg Emperor in 1621, while the patch of green grass marks the neo-Gothic east wing of the town hall, burned down by the Nazis on the final day of the Prague Uprising in May 1945. Nowadays, the square is filled with café tables in summer, an ice rink and a Christmas market in winter, and all year round, tourists pour in to watch the town hall's astronomical clock chime, to sit on the steps of the Hus Monument, and to drink in the atmosphere of this historic showpiece.

Hus Monument

The colossal Jan Hus Monument, unveiled in 1915, features a turbulent sea of blackened bodies – the oppressed to his right, the defiant to his left – out of which rises the majestic moral authority of Hus himself, a radical religious reformer and martyr from the fifteenth century. The Austrians refused to hold an official unveiling of the statue; in protest, on the 500th anniversary of his death, Praguers smothered the monument in flowers. Since then it has been a powerful symbol of Czech nationalism: in March 1939, it was draped in swastikas by the invading Nazis, and in August 1968, it was shrouded in funereal black by Praguers, protesting at the Soviet invasion. The inscription along the base is a quote from the will of Comenius (see p.80), one of Hus's seventeenth-century followers, and includes Hus's most famous dictum, *Pravda vítězí* (Truth Prevails), which has been the motto of just about every Czech revolution since then.

▲ STARÉ MĚSTO TOWN HALL

Staré Město Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice)

April–Oct Mon 11am–6pm, Tues–Sun 9am–6pm; Nov–March closes 5pm. 30Kč. The Staré Město Town Hall occupies a whole sequence of houses on Staroměstské náměstí, culminating in an obligatory wedge-tower with a graceful Gothic oriel. It's hardly worth taking the twenty-minute guided tour of the few rooms that survived the last war, but fun to climb the tower for the panoramic view across Prague's spires. You can also visit the medieval chapel, which has patches of original wall painting, and wonderful grimacing corbels at the foot of the ribbed vaulting. If you get there just before the clock strikes the hour, you can also watch the Apostles going out on parade.

Astronomical Clock

Hourly 8am–8pm. The most popular feature on Staroměstské náměstí is the town hall's fifteenth-century Astronomical Clock, whose hourly mechanical dumbshow regularly attracts a crowd of tourists. Little figures of the Apostles shuffle past the top two windows, bowing to the audience, while perched on pinnacles below are the four threats to the city as perceived by the medieval mind: Death carrying his hourglass and tolling his bell, the Jew with his moneybags (since 1945 shorn of his stereotypical beard and referred to as Greed), Vanity admiring his reflection, and a turbaned Turk shaking his head. Beneath the moving figures, four characters representing Philosophy, Religion, Astronomy and History, stand motionless throughout the performance. Finally, a cockerel pops out and flaps its wings to signal that the show's over; the clock then chimes the hour.

Kinský Palace

Staroměstské náměstí 12 ⓣ 224 820 758, ⓦ www.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 100Kč. The largest secular building on the square is the Rococo Kinský Palace, which was once a German Gymnasium, attended by, among others, Franz Kafka (whose

▲ ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK

father ran a haberdashery shop on the ground floor). The palace is perhaps most notorious, however, as the venue for the fateful speech by the Communist prime minister, Klement Gottwald, who walked out onto the grey stone balcony one snowy February morning in 1948, flanked by his Party henchmen, to celebrate the Communist takeover with the thousands of enthusiastic supporters who packed the square below. Gottwald's appearance forms the memorable opening to Milan Kundera's novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. The top floor now hosts first-rate exhibitions of graphic art.

Týn church (Matka boží před Týnem)

The mighty Týn church is by far the most imposing Gothic structure in the Staré Město. Its two irregular towers, bristling with baubles, spires and pinnacles, rise like giant antennae above the arcaded houses which otherwise obscure its facade, and are spectacularly lit up at night. Inside, the church has a lofty, narrow nave punctuated at ground level by black and gold Baroque altarpieces. One or two original Gothic furnishings survive, most notably the pulpit and the fifteenth-century baldachin, housing a winged altar in the north aisle. Behind the pulpit, you'll find another superb winged altar depicting John the Baptist, dating from 1520. The pillar on the right of the chancel steps contains the red marble tomb of Tycho Brahe, the famous Danish astronomer who was court astronomer to Rudolf II.

Dům U zlatého prstenů (House of the Golden Ring)

Týnská 6 ⓣ224 827 022, ⓦwww.citygalleryprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 60Kč. Housed in a handsome Gothic town house, this art gallery offers a good taster of twentieth-century Czech art. The permanent

collection is spread out over three floors, and arranged thematically rather than chronologically, while the cellars provide space for contemporary exhibitions; there's also a nice café across the courtyard. The pictures on display change quite frequently, but first-floor highlights should include *Destitute Land*, Max Švabinský's none-too-subtle view of life under the Habsburg yoke; works by two of Bohemia's best-loved eccentrics, Josef Váchal and František Bílek; and the odd Socialist Realist piece like Eduard Stavinoha's cartoon-like *Striking Demonstrators 24.2.1948*. The second floor ranges from Antonín Slavíček's easy-on-the-eye Impressionist views of Prague to dissident works such as Michael Rittstein's political allegory *Slumber beneath a Large Hand* and Eva Kmentová's plaster-cast *Hands* peppered with bullet holes. On the third floor there's usually an excellent collection of mad collages by Jiří Kolář, made up of cut-up pieces of reproductions of other artists' works.

Church of sv Jakub

Malá Štupartská 6. Mon–Sat 9am–12.30pm & 2.30–4pm, Sun 2–4pm. Before you enter the church make sure you admire the distinctive bubbling, stucco portal above the main entrance. The church's massive Gothic proportions – it has the longest nave in Prague after the cathedral – make it a favourite venue for organ recitals, Mozart masses and other concerts. After the great fire of 1689, Prague's Baroque artists remodelled the entire interior, adding huge pilasters, a series of colourful frescoes and over twenty side altars. The church has close historical links with the butchers of Prague, who are responsible for the thoroughly decomposed human forearm hanging high up on the west wall, on the right as you enter. It has been there for over four hundred years now, ever since a thief tried to steal the jewels of the Madonna from the high altar. As the thief reached out, the Virgin supposedly grabbed his arm and refused to let go. The next day the congregation of butchers had no option but to lop it off, and it has hung there as a warning ever since.

Convent of St Agnes (Anežský klášter)

U milosrdných 17 ☎221 879 111, Ⓦwww.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 100Kč. Prague's oldest surviving Gothic building, founded in 1233 as a Franciscan convent for the Order of the Poor Clares, now provides a fittingly atmospheric setting for the city's chief medieval art collection. The exhibition is arranged chronologically, starting with a remarkable silver-gilt casket from 1360 used to house the skull of St Ludmila. The nine panels from the Vyšší Brod altarpiece, from around 1350, are also among the finest in central Europe. The real gems of the collection, however, are the six panels by Master Theodoric, who painted over one hundred such paintings for Charles IV's castle chapel at Karlštejn. These larger-than-life, half-length portraits of saints, church fathers and so on are full of intense expression and richly coloured detail, their depictions spilling onto the embossed frames. For a glimpse of some extraordinary draughtsmanship, check out the woodcuts by the likes of Cranach the Elder and

Dürer – the seven-headed beast in Dürer's Apocalypse cycle is particularly Harry Potter. If you pay a small extra charge, you get to see the inside of the Gothic cloisters and the bare church that serves as a resting place for, among others, Václav I (1205–53), and St Agnes herself.

Museum of Czech Cubism (Muzeum českého kubismu)

Ovocný trh 19 www.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 100Kč. The museum is housed in Dům U černé Matky boží (House at the Black Madonna), built as a department store in 1911–12 by Josef Gočár and one of the best examples of Czech Cubist architecture in Prague. The permanent collection on the top two floors has a little bit of everything that the short-lived Czech Cubist movement produced, from sofas and sideboards by Gočár himself, to paintings by Emil Filla and Josef Čapek, plus some wonderful sculptures by Otto Gutfreund and models of the Cubist villas in Vyšehrad (see p.118).

Estates Theatre (Stavovské divadlo)

Ovocný trh 1. The lime-green and white theatre was built in the early 1780s for the entertainment of Prague's large and powerful German community and remains one of the finest Neoclassical buildings in Prague, reflecting the enormous self-confidence of its patrons. The theatre has a place in Czech history, too, however, for it was here that the Czech national anthem, *Kde domov můj* (*Where Is My Home*), was first performed. It is also something of a mecca for Mozart fans, since it was here that the premieres of *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito* took place. This is, in fact, one of the few opera houses in Europe which remains intact from Mozart's time (though it underwent major refurbishment during the nineteenth century), and it was used by Miloš Forman to film the concert scenes for his Oscar-laden *Amadeus*.

Wax Museum (Muzeum voskových figurín)

Melantrichova 5 ☎224 229 852, www.waxmuseumprague.cz. Daily 9am–8pm. 250Kč. This museum is aimed primarily at a domestic Czech audience. For anyone familiar with London's Madame Tussaud's, the formula is predictable enough, but unless your grasp of Czech history is pretty good, many of the wax tableaux will remain slightly baffling. The most popular section with the locals is the

▲ WOODEN TOYS AT HAVELSKÁ MARKET

podium of Commie stooges ranging from Lenin to the Czechs' home-grown Stalinist, Klement Gottwald, followed by today's generation of Czech politicians dressed in bad suits.

Bethlehem Chapel (Betlémská kaple)

Betlémské náměstí 4 ☎224 248 595. Tues–Sun: April–Oct 10am–6.30pm; Nov–March 10am–5.30pm. 30Kč. The Bethlehem Chapel was founded in 1391 by religious reformists, who, denied the right to build a church, proceeded instead to build the largest chapel in Bohemia, with a total capacity of 3000 exactly. Sermons were delivered not in the customary Latin, but in the language of the masses – Czech. From 1402 to 1413, Jan Hus preached here, regularly pulling in more than enough commoners to fill the chapel and the leader of the German Peasants' Revolt, Thomas Müntzer, preached here in the sixteenth century. Of the original building, only the three outer walls remain, with restored patches of the biblical scenes, used to get the message across to the illiterate congregation. The rest is a scrupulous reconstruction, using the original plans and a fair amount of imaginative guesswork.

Náprstek Museum

Betlémské náměstí 1 ☎224 497 500, Ⓦ www.aconet.cz/npm. Tues–Sun 9am–5.30pm. 60Kč. Vojta Náprstek, founder of the Náprstkovo muzeum, was inspired by the great Victorian museums of London and turned the family brewery into a museum, initially intending it to concentrate on the virtues of industrial progress. Náprstek's interests gradually shifted towards anthropology, however, and it is his ethnographic collections from the Americas, Australasia and Oceania that are now displayed in the museum. Despite the fact that the museum could clearly do with an injection of cash, it still manages to put on some really excellent temporary ethnographic exhibitions on the ground floor, and also does a useful job of promoting tolerance of different cultures.

Smetana Museum

Novotného lávka 1 ☎222 220 082. Daily except Tues 10am–noon & 12.30–5pm. 50Kč. Housed in a gaily decorated neo-Renaissance building on the riverfront itself, the museum celebrates the life and work of the most nationalist of all the great Czech composers. He enjoyed his greatest success as a composer with *The Bartered Bride*, which marked the birth of Czech opera, but he was forced to give up conducting in 1874 with the onset of deafness, and eventually died of syphilis in a mental asylum. Unfortunately, the museum fails to capture much of the spirit of the man, though the views across to the castle are good, and you get to wave a laser baton around in order to listen to his music.

Shops

Anagram

Týn 4 Ⓦwww.anagram.cz. Well-stocked, central English-language bookstore, which has lots of books on Czech politics and culture, plus a small second-hand section.

Botanicus

Týn 3 Ⓦwww.botanicus.cz. Czech take on the Body Shop, with a folksy ambience; dried flowers and fancy honey are sold alongside natural soaps and shampoos.

Country Life

Melantrichova 15. Health-food shop selling excellent picnic fodder, organic vegetables, dried fruit and take-away sandwiches. There's an excellent self-service restaurant round the back, too.

Fraktály

Betlémské náměstí 5. Great bookshop with stylish armchairs to collapse into and peruse books on design, architecture and fine art, or a good place to pick up a groovy poster or arty gift.

Galerie Art Deco

Michalská 21. Closed Sat & Sun. A stylish antique shop crammed with a wonderful mixture of clothes, hats, mufflers, teapots, glasses, clocks and art.

Havelská market

Havelská. Open-air market selling fruit, flowers and vegetables, the full length of the arcaded Havelská, with CDs, souvenirs and wooden toys.

Kubista

Ovocný trh 19 Ⓦwww.kubista.cz. Beautiful shop selling

reproductions of some of the exquisite Cubist ceramics on display in the Museum of Czech Cubism, housed in the same building.

Manufaktura

Melantrichova 17. Czech folk-inspired shop with a fantastic array of wooden toys, painted Easter eggs, straw decorations, honeycomb candles and sundry kitchen utensils.

Modernista

Konviktská 5 www.modernista.cz. Closed Sun. Beautiful but pricey emporium of interwar light fittings, furniture, posters and crockery.

Propagační předmězy

Týnská ulička 10. This little shop is a great place to stock up on Czech flags, lions, badges and various other tacky souvenirs.

Sparkys

Havířská 2 www.sparkys.cz. Prague's top dům hraček (House of Toys) on four floors, which stocks everything from high-tech to traditional wooden toys.

Sparta Praha

Betlémské náměstí 7. Closed Sat & Sun. Centrally located Sparta Praha shop stocking everything the footie fan might want, from shirts to ashtrays, and even the odd souvenir from rivals Slavia, too.

Cafés

Au Gourmand

Dlouhá 10. Beautifully tiled French boulangerie, patisserie and traiteur selling wickedly delicious pastries; most folk take away, but there are a few tables and a daily soup on offer.

Bakeshop Praha

V Kolkovně 2. Top-class expat bakery serving excellent bread, sandwiches, quiches, wraps and cakes, which you can either take away or wash down with coffee, whilst reading the papers.

Country Life

Melantrichova 15. Self-service café behind health-food shop of the same name (see opposite): pile up your plate with hot or cold dishes and salad and pay by weight.

Dahab

Dlouhá 33 www.dahab.cz. The mother of all Prague teahouses, a vast Bedouin tent of a place serving tasty Middle Eastern snacks, couscous and hookahs to a background of funky world music.

Dobrá čajovna

Boršov 2 www.cajovna.com. The original, mellow, slightly precious, rarefied teahouse, with an astonishing variety of teas (and a few Middle Eastern snacks) served by waiters who slip by silently in their sandals. This place is off Karoliny Světlé and you'll need to ring the bell to get in.

Ebel

Týn 2 www.ebelcoffee.cz. Fashionable and convenient little café serving very good coffee and tasty snacks, hidden away in the Týn courtyard behind the Týn church.

Montmartre

Řetězová 7. Surprisingly small, barrel-vaulted café that was once a famous First Republic dance and cabaret venue, frequented by the likes of Werfel, Jesenská and Hašek.

Sushi Sandwich

Divadelní 24. Closed Sat & Sun. Tiny eat-in or take-away lunchtime café slicing sushi into nori-encased sandwiches for under 100Kč a go.

Restaurants

Ariana

Rámová 5 ⓣ222 323 438. Friendly family-run Afghan restaurant which turns out some unusual spicy dishes (all for 200Kč or less) – try the fried aubergine or the unique ashak.

Bellevue

Smetanovo nábřeží 18 ⓣ222 221 438, ⓦwww.praguefinedining.cz. The view of Charles Bridge and the Hrad is outstanding and they serve imaginative Czech-centred cuisine – hardly surprising then that main courses start at 500kč and you need to book ahead to eat here.

Don Giovanni

Karoliny Světlé 34 ⓣ222 222 060, ⓦwww.dongiovanni.cz. One of the best Italian restaurants in town, with a straightforward menu, offering all the classic dishes (from 400Kč), plus fresh fish and seafood and top-class tiramisu.

Kogo

Havelská 27 ⓣ224 214 543. Divided into two intimate spaces by a passageway with a small courtyard out back, this place offers decent pasta, pizza and salads for under 350Kč, served by courteous and efficient waiters.

Mlýnec

Novotného lávka 9 ⓣ221 082 208, ⓦwww.praguefinedining.cz. Michelin-approved international cuisine and a fabulous terrace overlooking the Charles Bridge and the Castle – expect to pay 500Kč upwards for your main dish.

▲ OLD TOWN SQUARE CAFÉS

Orange Moon
Rámová 5 ⓣ222 325 119 ⓦwww.orangemoon.cz. Popular Burmese restaurant that cooks up spicy curries for under 200Kč, washed down with Czech beer.

Pravda (Truth)
Pařížská 17 ⓣ222 326 203. Trendy restaurant on Prague's premier chic street pulling in fashionable customers. Service is attentive and the excellent menu ranges from Cajun to Vietnamese, with main dishes starting at around 350Kč.

Red, Hot & Blues
Jakubská 12 ⓣ222 314 639. Laid-back joint deep in the heart of expat territory serving chilli-hot Tex-Mex – burritos, étouffées and Creole food – to the sound of jazz and blues.

Rybí trh
Týn 5 ⓣ224 895 447, ⓦwww.flambee.cz. Swish fish and seafood restaurant in the Týn courtyard, where you pick your victim – anything from sea bass to swordfish (400–900Kč) – and tell the chef how to cook it.

U modré kachničky II (The Blue Duckling)
Michalská 16 ⓣ224 213 418, ⓦwww.umodrekachnicky.cz. Intimate little restaurant, decorated with murals and antiques, offering a mouth-watering selection of dishes for 300–500Kč, including many Czech favourites – such as roast duck with pears – given the gourmet treatment.

Pubs and bars

Blatnička
Michalská 6. Wine shop where you can drink straight from the barrel, take away, or head next door to the popular basement *vinárna* for more wine and cheap Czech food.

Kozička
Kozí 4 ⓦwww.kozicka.cz. Busy, unpretentious bare-brick cellar bar with cheap Czech food, tucked away just a short walk from Staroměstské náměstí.

Marquis de Sade
Templová 8. Great space: huge high ceiling, big comfy sofas, and a mostly expat crowd. The beer's not great and snacks limited, but a good place to start the evening (before the live band kicks in) or end it (after they've packed up).

Molly Malone's
U Obecního dvora 4 ⓦwww.mollymalones.cz. Best of Prague's Irish pubs with real Irish staff (who speak very little Czech), an open fire, draught Kilkenny and Guinness, and decent Irish-themed food.

Od soumraku do úsvitu (From Dawn 'til Dusk)
Týnská 19. Atmospheric, low-lit, late-night bar in the backstreets behind the Týn church, serving cocktails to a smart, dressed-up crowd.

U medvídků (The Little Bears)
Na Perštýně 7. A Prague beer hall going back to the thirteenth century and still much the same as it ever was (make sure you turn right when you enter, and avoid the new bar to the left). The Budvar comes thick and fast, and the food is absolutely standard.

U zlatého tygra (The Golden Tiger)
Husava 17. Small central *pivnice*

serving a very local loyal following; the late writer and bohemian, Bohumil Hrabal, was a semi-permanent resident.

Performing arts and film

Divadlo Image

Pařížská 4 ⓣ222 329 191 ⓦwww.imagetheatre.cz. Probably the best of the city's various "black light theatre" venues, offering dialogue-free, tourist-friendly dance and pantomime shows.

Estates Theatre (Stavovské divadlo)

Ovocný trh 1 ⓣ224 215 001, ⓦwww.narodni-divadlo.cz. Prague's oldest opera house puts on a mixture of opera, ballet and straight theatre (with simultaneous headphone translation available).

Ponrepo Bio Konvikt

Bartolomějská 11 ⓣ224 233 281. Closed Sat & Sun. Cinema showing really old classic films from the black-and-white era, dug out from the National Film Archives. You need to fill in a membership form for which you need to supply a photo, along with150Kč.

Roxy

Dlouhá 33 ⓦwww.roxy.cz. The Roxy is a great little venue: a laid-back rambling old theatre with an interesting programme of events from arty films and exhibitions to live acts and DJ nights.

Clubs and live music

Jazz Club Železná

Železná 16 ⓦwww.jazzclub.cz. Inexpensive, centrally located cellar venue that puts on a mixed bag of trad and contemporary jazz, blues and fusion, plus the odd world-music night.

Karlovy lázně

Novotného lavka 1 ⓦwww.karlovylazne.cz. Mega, high-tech club on four floors of an old bathhouse by the Charles Bridge; techno on the top floor, progressively more retro as you descend to the Internet café on the ground floor.

U staré paní (The Old Woman)

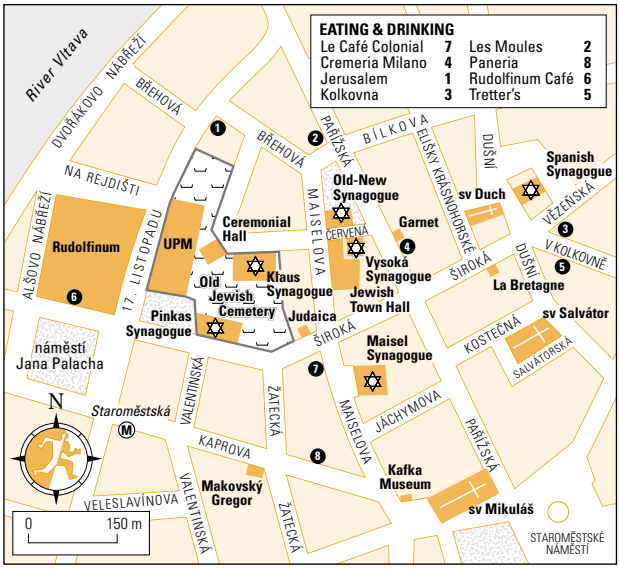
Michalská 9 ⓦwww.ustarepani.cz. Decent old-town jazz restaurant that really gets going when the live contemporary jazz kicks in from 9pm onwards each night.

Josefov

The old Jewish ghetto district of Josefov is one of the most unforgettable sights in Prague. Although the warren-like street plan of the old ghetto was demolished in the 1890s to make way for streets of luxurious five-storey mansions, six synagogues, the Jewish town hall and the medieval cemetery still survive to this day. There's no denying that the sheer volume of tourists visiting Josefov has turned the area into something of a tourist trap. Yet to skip this part of the old town is to miss out on a fascinating and essential slice of the city's cultural history. All the sights of Josefov, except the Old-New Synagogue, are collectively known as "the Jewish Museum" (ⓦwww.jewishmuseum.cz), and are covered by an all-in-one 300Kč ticket, available from the quarter's numerous ticket offices. Opening hours vary but are basically daily except Saturday April–October 9am–6pm and November–March 9am–4.30pm.

Franz Kafka Museum

U radnice 5. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 40Kč. The writer Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, above the Batalion Schnapps bar on the corner of Maiselova and



▲ KAFKA

Kaprova. The original building has long since been torn down, but a gaunt-looking modern bust now commemorates the site and beside it is the Museum, a modest exhibition retelling Kafka's life simply but effectively with pictures and quotes. Kafka spent most of his life living in and around Josefov, working as an accident insurance clerk, until he was forced to retire through ill health in 1922. He died of tuberculosis in a sanatorium just outside Vienna, on June 3, 1924, and is buried in the New Jewish Cemetery in Žižkov (see p.120).

Old-New Synagogue (Staronová synagoga)

Červená 2. Mon–Thurs & Sun 9.30am–5pm, Fri 9.30am–4pm or dusk. 200Kč. Begun in the second half of the thirteenth century, this synagogue is, in fact, the oldest functioning synagogue in Europe, one of the earliest Gothic buildings in Prague and still the religious centre for Prague's Orthodox Jews. The low glow from the chandeliers is the only light in the main hall, which is mostly taken up with the elaborate wrought-iron cage enclosing the bimah in the centre. In 1357, Charles IV allowed the Jews to fly their own municipal standard, a moth-eaten remnant of which is still on show, bearing the Star of David (Prague's Jewish community were the first to adopt the Star as their official symbol). The other flag – a tattered red banner – was a gift to the community from Emperor Ferdinand III for helping fend off the Swedes in 1648.

Jewish Town Hall (Židovská radnice)

Maiselova 18. The Jewish Town Hall is one of few such buildings in central Europe to survive the Holocaust. Founded and funded by Mordecai Maisel, minister of finance to Rudolf II, in the sixteenth century, it was later rebuilt as the creamy-pink Baroque house you now see, housing, among other things, a kosher restaurant. The belfry has a clock on each of its four sides, plus a Hebrew one stuck on the north gable which, like the Hebrew script, goes "backwards".

Maisel Synagogue

Maiselova 10. Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. Like the town hall, the neo-Gothic Maisel Synagogue was founded and paid for entirely by Mordecai Maisel. Set back from the

neighbouring houses south down Maiselova, the synagogue was, in its day, one of the most ornate in Josefov. Nowadays, its bare whitewashed turn-of-the-century interior houses an exhibition on the history of the Jewish community up until the 1848 emancipation, as well as glass cabinets filled with gold and silverwork, Hanukkah candlesticks, torah scrolls and other religious artefacts.

Pinkas Synagogue

Široká 3. Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. Built in the 1530s for the powerful Horovitz family, the Pinkas Synagogue has undergone countless restorations over the centuries. In 1958, the synagogue was transformed into a chilling memorial (see below) to the 77,297 Czech Jews killed during the Holocaust. The memorial was closed shortly after the 1967 Six Day War – due to damp, according to the Communists – and remained so, allegedly due to problems with the masonry, until it was finally, painstakingly restored in the 1990s. All that remains of the synagogue's original decor today is the ornate bimah surrounded by a beautiful wrought-iron grille, supported by barley-sugar columns.

Of all the sights of the Jewish quarter, the Holocaust memorial is perhaps the most moving, with every bit of wall space taken up with the carved stone list of victims, stating simply their name, date of birth and date of death or transportation to the camps. It is the longest epitaph in the world, yet it represents a mere fraction of those who died in the Nazi concentration camps. Upstairs in a room beside the women's gallery, there's also a harrowing exhibition of drawings by children from the Jewish ghetto in Terezín, most of whom later perished in the camps.

Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý židovský hřbitov)

Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. At the heart of Josefov is the Old Jewish Cemetery, known as *beit hayyim* in Hebrew, meaning "House of Life". Established in the fifteenth century, it was in use until 1787, by which time there were an estimated 100,000 buried here, one on top of the other, six palms apart, and as many as twelve layers deep. The enormous number of visitors has meant that the graves themselves have been roped off to protect them, and a one-way system introduced: you enter from the Pinkas Synagogue and leave by the Klaus Synagogue. Get there before the crowds – a difficult task for much of the year – and the cemetery can be a poignant reminder of the ghetto, its inhabitants subjected to inhuman overcrowding even in death. The rest of Prague recedes beyond the sombre lime trees and cramped perimeter walls, the haphazard headstones and Hebrew inscriptions casting a powerful spell. On many graves you'll see pebbles, some holding down *kvittleh* or small messages of supplication.

▲ OLD-NEW SYNAGOGUE

The Holocaust

Under the Nazis, the majority of Prague's Jews were sent to their deaths, but, by a grotesque twist of fate, the synagogues, town hall and cemetery of Josefov were preserved on Hitler's orders to form the centrepiece of his planned "Exotic Museum of an Extinct Race". To this end, Jewish artefacts from all over central Europe were gathered here by the Nazis, and today make up one of the most comprehensive collections of Judaica in Europe.

Ceremonial Hall (Obřadní síň)

U starého hřbitova. Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. Immediately on your left as you leave the cemetery is the Ceremonial Hall, a lugubrious neo-Renaissance house built in 1906 as a ceremonial hall by the Jewish Burial Society. Appropriately enough, it's now devoted to an exhibition on Jewish traditions of burial and death, though it would probably be more useful if you could visit it before heading into the cemetery, rather than after.

Klaus Synagogue

U starého hřbitova 1. Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. A late seventeenth-century building, the Klaus Synagogue was founded in the 1690s by Mordecai Maisel on the site of several small buildings (Klausen), in what was then a notorious red-light district of Josefov. The ornate Baroque interior contains a rich display of religious objects from embroidered *kippah* to Kiddush cups, and explains the very basics of Jewish religious practice, and the chief festivals or High Holidays.

Pařížská

Running through the heart of the old ghetto is Pařížská, the ultimate bourgeois avenue, lined with buildings covered in a riot of turn-of-the-century sculpturing, spikes and turrets. Totally at odds with the rest of Josefov, its ground-floor premises are home to designer clothes shops, jewellery stores and swanky cafés, restaurants and bars.

▲ CLOCK ON JEWISH TOWN HALL

Spanish Synagogue

Vězeňská 1. Covered by Jewish Museum ticket. Begun in 1868, the Spanish Synagogue is by far the most ornate synagogue in Josefov, its stunning, gilded Moorish interior deliberately

▲ OLD JEWISH CEMETERY

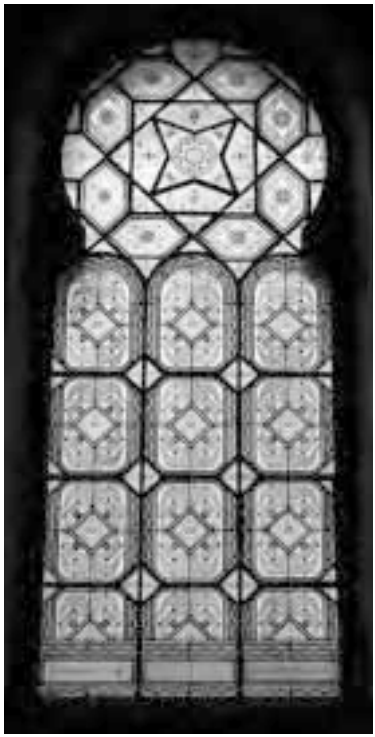
imitating the Alhambra (hence its name). Every available surface is smothered with a profusion of floral motifs and geometric patterns, in vibrant reds, greens and blues, which are repeated in the synagogue's huge stained-glass windows. The synagogue also houses an interesting exhibition on the history of Prague's Jews from the time of the 1848 emancipation to the Holocaust. Lovely, slender, painted cast-iron columns hold up the women's gallery, where the displays include a fascinating set of photos depicting the old ghetto at the time of its demolition. There's a section on Prague's German-Jewish writers, including Kafka, and information on the Holocaust.

Rudolfinum

Alšovo nábřeží 12. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. The Rudolfinum or House of Artists (Dům umělců), is one of the proud civic buildings of the nineteenth-century Czech national revival. Originally built to house an art gallery, museum and concert hall for the Czech-speaking community, it became the seat of the new Czechoslovak parliament, until 1938 when it was closed down by the Nazis. Since 1946, the building has returned to its original artistic purpose and it's now one of the capital's main concert venues (home to the Czech Philharmonic) and exhibition spaces.

UPM (Museum of Decorative Arts)

17 listopadu 2 ⓣ251 093 111, ⓦwww.upm.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 120Kč. From its foundation in 1885 through to the end of the First Republic, the Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum or UPM received the best that the Czech modern movement had to offer – from Art Nouveau to the avant-garde – and its collection is consequently unrivalled. The building itself is richly decorated in mosaics, stained glass and



▲ SPANISH SYNAGOGUE

sculptures and its ground-floor temporary exhibitions are consistently excellent. The permanent collection begins on the first floor with the Votive Hall, which is ornately decorated with trompe l'oeil wall hangings, lunette paintings and a bewhiskered bust of Emperor Franz-Josef I. Next door is the Story of a Fibre, which is dominated by a double-decker costume display: richly embroidered religious vestments above and fashionable attire from the eighteenth century to modern catwalk concoctions below.

The Arts of Fire is home to the museum's impressive glass, ceramic and pottery displays, from eighteenth-century Meissen figures to Art-Nouveau Lötz vases. The print and images room is devoted mainly to Czech photography, and includes numerous prints from the art form's interwar heyday, including several works by František Drtikol, Jaromír Funkes and Josef Sudek. Finally, in the treasure hall, there's a kind of modern-day Kunstkammer or cabinet of curiosities: everything from ivory objets d'art and seventeenth-century Italian pietra dure (hardstone mosaics), to miniature silver furniture and a goblet made from rhino horn.

Shops

Garnet
Pařížská 20. The best place to get hold of fiery red Bohemian garnets or Polish amber jewellery.

Judaica
Široká 7. Closed Sat. Probably the best-stocked of all the places flogging Jewish books to passing tourists, with books and prints, second-hand and new.

La Bretagne
Široká 22. Closed Sat. Wide array of fresh fish and seafood available at this centrally located fishmonger's, plus takeaway sushi.

Makovský-Gregor
Kaprova 9. Appealingly chaotic little second-hand bookshop with old prints and English-language books.

Cafés

Cremeria Milano
Pařížská 20. Stylish little place with a fantastic array of real Italian ice cream, plus a few tables inside where you can have a coffee, pastry or salad.

Paneria
Kaprova 3. Central branch of a large chain of Czech bakeries specializing in providing sandwiches, toasted panini and pastries for Prague's hungry office workers.

Rudolfinum
Alšovo nábřeží 12. Closed Mon. Gloriously grand nineteenth-century café on the first floor of the old parliament building – you don't have to visit the gallery to go to the café.

Restaurants

Le Café Colonial
Široká 6 ⓣ224 818 322. Conveniently situated café/restaurant right opposite the Klaus Synagogue. The colonial theme isn't overplayed, though the moderately expensive French-based menu has a touch of Chinese and Indian.

Jerusalem
Břehová 6 ⓣ224 812 001. One of a rash of kosher places on Břehová, on the edge of the old Jewish quarter; decor is very plain, service relaxed, and the inexpensive dairy menu vast and tasty, ranging from breakfasts and savoury pancakes to full meals.

Les Moules
Pařížská 19 ⓣ222 315 022, ⓦwww.lesmoules.cz. Decent approximation of a smart, wood-panelled Belgian brasserie serving mussels for around 400Kč a bowl, flown in fresh, washed down with Belgian or Czech beers.

Pubs

Kolkovna
V kolkovně 8. Plush pub decor, excellent pub food and Pilsner Urquell on tap – this place is justifiably popular.

Tretter's
V kolkovně 3. Very smart evening-only cocktail bar serving the best mixes in the whole of Prague.

▲ PAŘÍŽSKÁ

Wenceslas Square and northern Nové Město

Nové Město – Prague's "New Town" – is the city's main commercial and business district, housing most of its big hotels, cinemas, nightclubs, fast-food outlets and department stores. Architecturally, it comes over as big, bourgeois and predominantly turn-of-the-century, yet the large market squares and wide streets were actually laid out way back in the fourteenth century by Emperor Charles IV. The obvious starting point in Nové Město is Wenceslas Square, the long, sloping boulevard with its distinctive, interwar shopping malls, which was at the centre of the 1989 demonstrations against communism, and is today at the hub of the modern city.

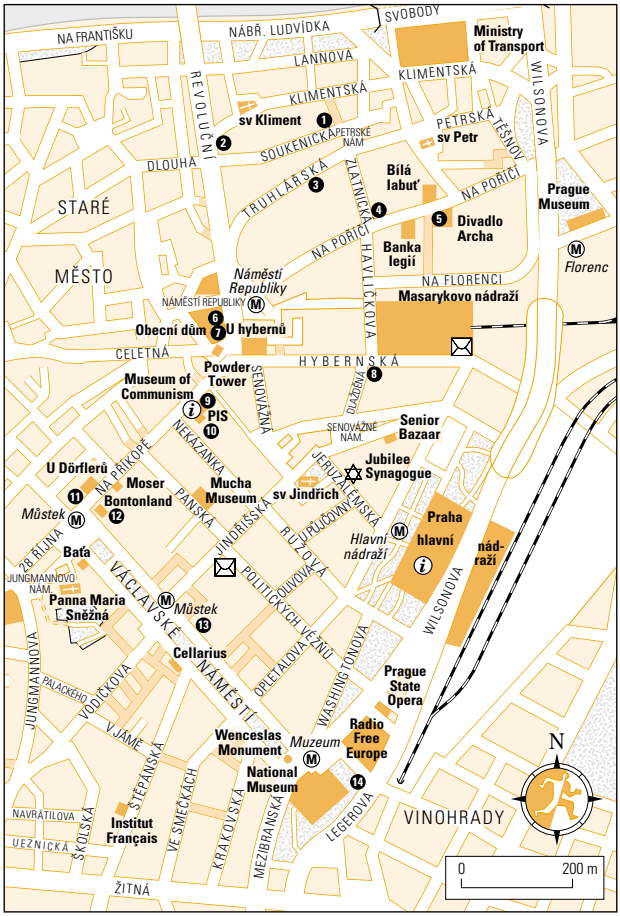
Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí)

The natural pivot around which modern Prague revolves, Wenceslas Square is more of a wide, gently sloping boulevard than a square as such. It's scarcely a conventional – or even convenient – space in which to hold mass demonstrations, yet for the last hundred and fifty years or more it has been the focus of political protest in Prague. In August 1968, it was the scene of some of the most violent confrontations between the Soviet invaders and the local Czechs. And, of course, it was at the top of the square, on January 16, 1969, that Jan Palach set fire to himself in protest at the continuing occupation of the country by Russian troops. More happily, in late November 1989, more than 250,000 people crammed into the square night after night, often enduring subzero temperatures, to demand free elections.

Despite the square's medieval origins, it is now lined with self-important six- or seven-storey buildings, representing every artistic trend of the last hundred years, from neo-Renaissance to Socialist Realism. At the top of the square, in front of the grandiose National Museum, stands the Wenceslas Monument, a worthy and heroic, but pretty unexciting, equestrian statue of the country's patron saint. Below

Prague's pasáže

Wenceslas Square has an impressive array of old shopping arcades or *pasáže*, as they're known in Czech, dating from the interwar period. Compared with the chic passages off the Champs Elysées, Prague's *pasáže* offer more modest pleasures: a few shops, the odd café and, more often than not, a cinema. The king of the lot is the lavishly decorated Lucerna *pasáž*, stretching all the way from Štěpánská to Vodičkova, and boasting an equally ornate cinema, café and vast concert hall.



EATING AND DRINKING					
Albio	3	Diwan	12	Millhouse Sushi - Kaitan	10
American Bar	7	Francouzská restaurace	6	Obecní dům	6
Archa	5	Govinda	1	Pizeňská restaurace	6
Arco	8	Grand Hotel Evropa	13	U sádlů	2
Café Imperial	4	Joshua Tree	9	Zahrada v opěre	14
		Juice	11		

the statue, a simple memorial commemorating the victims of communism is adorned with flowers and photos of Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc, both of whom martyred themselves here in

▲ WENCESLAS MONUMENT

1969, in protest at the Soviet invasion.

National Museum (Národní muzeum)

Václavské náměstí 68 ⓣ224 497 111, ⓦwww.nm.cz. Daily: May–Sept 10am–6pm; Oct–April 9am–5pm. 100Kč. Deliberately modelled on the great European museums of Paris and Vienna, the broad, brooding hulk of the National Museum, built in 1890, dominates the view up the square like a giant golden eagle with outstretched wings. One of the great landmarks of the nineteenth-century Czech national revival, the museum is old-fashioned and underfunded, but it's worth taking at least a quick look at the ornate marble entrance hall and splendid monumental staircase leading to the glass-domed Pantheon, with its 48 busts and statues of distinguished bewhiskered Czech men (plus a couple of token women and Slovaks). The rest of the permanent collection is dowdy, poorly labelled and filled with coins, fossils and stuffed animals. The museum's temporary exhibitions can be very good, however, so it's always worth checking to see what's on.

Na příkopě

Na příkopě (literally "On the moat") traces the course of the old moat, which was finally paved over in 1760. The street still marks the border between Staré Město and Nové Město, with the dividing line running down the middle of the street. At the turn of the century,

▲ KIOSK, WENCESLAS SQUARE

these two partly pedestrianized streets formed the chief venue for the weekend passeggiata, and even today they are among the most crowded expanses of pavement in Prague. Along with a variety of swanky stores, banks, restaurants and clubs, you'll also discover some of the city's most ostentatious late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings.

Museum of Communism

Na příkopě 10 ⓣ224 212 966, ⓦwww.muzeumkomunismu.cz. Daily 9am–10pm. 180Kč. Above a casino, on the first floor of the Savarin Palace, the Museum of Communism gives a brief rundown of Czech twentieth-century history, accompanied by a superb collection of Communist statues, film footage and propaganda posters. The politics are a bit simplistic – the popular postwar support for the Party is underplayed – but it's worth tracking down for the memorabilia alone. Wrangles with the landlord may mean the place has to move premises, so check the website.

Powder Tower (Prašná brána)

Daily: April–Oct 10am–6pm. 30Kč. One of the eight medieval gate-towers that once guarded Staré Město, the Powder Tower was begun by King Vladislav Jagiello in 1475, shortly after he'd moved into the royal court, which was situated next door at the time. Work stopped when he retreated to the Hrad to avoid the wrath of his subjects; later on, it was used to store gunpowder – hence the name and the reason for the damage incurred in 1757. The small historical exhibition inside traces the tower's architectural metamorphosis over the centuries, up to its present remodelling courtesy of a nineteenth-century restoration project. Most people, though, ignore the displays, and climb straight up for the modest view from the top.

Obecní dům (Municipal House)

Náměstí Republiky 5 ⓦwww.obecni-dum.cz. Attached to the Powder Tower, and built on the ruins of the old royal court, the Obecní dům is by far the most exciting Art Nouveau building in Prague, one of the few places that still manages to conjure up the atmosphere of Prague's turn-of-the-century café society. Conceived as a cultural centre for the Czech community, it's probably the finest architectural achievement of the Czech national revival, extravagantly decorated inside and out by the leading Czech artists of the day. From the lifts to the cloakrooms, just about all the furnishings remain as they were when the building was completed in 1911.

The simplest way of soaking up the interior – peppered with mosaics and pendulous brass chandeliers – is to have a coffee in the cavernous café (see p.104). For a more detailed inspection of the building's spectacular interior, you can sign up for a guided tour at the information centre (daily 10am–6pm; 150Kč) on the ground floor.

Jubilee Synagogue

Jeruzalémská. Mid-April to mid-Oct daily except Sat 1–5pm. 30Kč. Named in honour of the sixtieth year of the Emperor Franz-Josef I's reign in 1908, the Jubilee Synagogue was built in an incredibly colourful Moorish style similar to that of the Spanish Synagogue in

Josefov, but with a touch of Art Nouveau. The Hebrew inscription on the facade strikes a note of liberal optimism: "Do we not have one father? Were we not created by the same God?"

Mucha Museum

Panská 7 ⓣ224 216 415, ⓦwww.mucha.cz. Daily 10am–6pm. 120Kč.

Dedicated to Alfons Mucha (1860–1939), probably the most famous of all Czech artists in the West, this museum has proved very popular. Mucha made his name in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, where he shot to fame after designing Art Nouveau posters for the actress Sarah Bernhardt. "Le Style Mucha" became all the rage, but the artist himself came to despise this "commercial" period of his work, and in 1910, Mucha moved back to his homeland and threw himself into the national cause, designing patriotic stamps, banknotes and posters for the new republic. The whole of Mucha's career is covered in the permanent exhibition, and an excellent video (in English) covers the decade of his life he devoted to the cycle of nationalist paintings known as the Slav Epic. In the end, Mucha paid for his Czech nationalism with his life; dragged in for questioning by the Gestapo after the 1939 Nazi invasion, he died shortly after being released.

Praha hlavní nádraží (Prague Main Train Station)

Prague's main railway station is one of the final architectural glories of the dying Habsburg Empire, designed by Josef Fanta and officially opened in 1909 as the Franz-Josefs Bahnhof. Arriving by metro, or buying tickets in the over-polished subterranean modern section, it's easy to miss the station's surviving Art Nouveau parts. The original entrance on busy Wilsonova still exudes imperial confidence, with its wrought-iron canopy and naked figurines clinging to the sides of the towers. You can sit and admire the main foyer from the café, *Fantová kavárna* (daily 6am–11pm) – it's also worth heading north from the foyer to take a peek at the ceramic pillars in the former station restaurant.

Banka legií

Na poříčí 24. Mon–Fri 8am–5pm. Free.

The Banka legií (now a branch of the ČSOB) is one of Prague's most unusual pieces of corporate architecture. A Rondo-Cubist building from the early 1920s, it boasts a striking white marble frieze by Otto Gutfreund, depicting the epic march across Siberia undertaken by the Czechoslovak Legion and their embroilment in the Russian Revolution, set into the bold smoky-red moulding of the facade. You're free to wander into the main banking hall on the ground floor,

▲ MAIN TRAIN STATION

which, though marred by the current bank fittings, retains its curved glass roof and distinctive red-and-white marble patterning. The glass-curtain-walled Bílá labut´ (White Swan) department store, opposite, is a good example of the functionalist style which was embraced in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Prague Museum

Na poříčí 52 ⓣ224 816 772, ⓦwww.muzeumprahy.cz. Tues–Sun 9am–6pm. 40Kč. A purpose-built neo-Renaissance mansion by a noisy motorway houses the Prague Museum. Inside, there's an ad hoc collection of the city's art, a number of antique bicycles, and usually an intriguing temporary exhibition on some aspect of the city. The museum's prize possession, though, is Antonín Langweil's paper model of Prague which he completed in the 1830s. It's a fascinating insight into early nineteenth-century Prague – predominantly Baroque, with the cathedral incomplete and the Jewish quarter "unsanitized" – and, consequently, has served as one of the most useful records for the city's restorers. The most surprising thing, of course, is that so little has changed.

Shops

Bontonland

Václavské náměstí 1 ⓦwww.bontonland.cz. Prague's biggest record store in the *pasáž* at the bottom of Wenceslas Square, stocking rock, folk, jazz and classical, with headphones for previews to boot.

Cellarius

Lucerna pasáž, Štěpánská 61 ⓦwww.cellarius.cz. Wine shop in the Lucerna passage off Wenceslas Square, stocking an extensive range of Moravian wines in all price brackets.

▲ LUCERNA PASSAGE

Baťa

Václavské náměstí 6. Functionalist flagship store of Baťa shoe empire with five floors of fancy footwear in a prime position on Wenceslas Square.

Moser

Na příkopě 12 ⓦwww.moser-glass.com. When it comes to lead-free, Czech crystal, Moser are top of the league, as are their prices.

Senior Bazar

Senovážné náměstí 18. Closed Sat & Sun. One of the city's more stylish second-hand/retro clothes shops.

Cafés

Archa

Na poříčí 26. Designer café belonging to the avant-garde venue of the same name, with big fishbowl windows for people-watching.

Arco
Hybernská/Dlažděná. Closed Sat & Sun. Busy after-work café that's a modern reconstruction of the Kaffeehaus that was once the haunt of Prague's German-speaking literati (including Kafka).

Café Imperial
Na poříčí 15 www.hotelimperial.cz. An endearingly shabby yet grand Habsburg-era Kaffeehaus which has retained its original, over-the-top ceramic tiled decor. The locals clearly approve of its unpretentious air, too, and the free doughnuts go down a treat.

Grand Hotel Evropa
Václavské náměstí 25. This sumptuous Art Nouveau café has all its original fittings, but has reached a new low in ambience and service. For architectural curiosity only.

Juice
Na příkopě 3–5. Prague's first juice bar, situated above the Clockhouse clothes store, with a whole wild range of juices and smoothies in the city's prime shopping district.

Obecní dům
Náměstí Republiky 5. The vast *kavárna*, with its famous fountain, is in the more restrained south hall of this huge Art Nouveau complex, and has recently been glitteringly restored – an absolute aesthetic treat.

Restaurants

Albio
Truhlářská 18 ☎222 317 902, www.albiostyl.cz. Closed Sun. Light and airy organic, mostly vegetarian restaurant, with its own bakery attached, serving a wide variety of dishes from around the world, all under 100Kč.

Diwan
Na příkopě 10 ☎224 231 515, www.diwan.cz. The full belly-dancing Lebanese monty, both in terms of decor and food: kebabs are 300–400Kč, hookahs 250Kč.

Francouzská restaurace
Náměstí Republiky 5 ☎222 002 270, www.obecni-dum.cz. The Art Nouveau decor in this cavernous hall, situated in the Obecní dům, is absolutely stunning; the setting is formal

▲ BÍLÁ LABUŤ DEPARTMENT STORE

and therefore puts a lot of tourists off, though the French-style food's good and not that expensive, with main courses rarely exceeding 500Kč.

Góvinda

Soukenická 27. Closed Sun. Daytime Hare Krishna (Haré Kršna in Czech) restaurant serving organic Indian veggie slop for knock-down prices.

Millhouse Sushi – Kaitan

Na příkopě 22 ⓣ222 716 003. Minimalist conveyor-belt sushi has arrived in Prague, at the back of the Slovanský dům; choose as many dishes (60–180Kč) as you wish, or dig into some of the grills or nigiri on offer.

Plzeňská restaurace

Náměstí Republiky 5 ⓣ222 002 770, ⓦwww.obecni-dum.cz. Decent Czech folk-themed pub-restaurant in the cellar of the Obecní dům – much cheaper than the French restaurant upstairs.

Zahrada v opeře (Opera Garden)

Legerova 75 ⓣ224 239 685, ⓦwww.zahradavopere.cz. Striking modern interior and beautifully presented food from around the world at democratic prices (main dishes for around 300Kč). The entrance is around the back of the Radio Free Europe building.

Pubs and bars

American Bar

Náměstí Republiky 5. The 1910 bar in the basement of the Obecní dům has been restored to its former glamour.

Joshua Tree

Na příkopě 22 ⓦwww.joshuatree.cz. Modern Irish pub in the basement of the Slovanksý dům building with stylish red banquettes to sink into and decent snacks to munch.

U sádlů (The Lard)

Klimentská ⓦwww.usadlu.cz. Deliberately over-the-top themed medieval beer hall serving inexpensive hearty fare and lashings of frothing Budvar.

Performing arts and film

Divadlo Archa

Na poříčí 26 ⓣ221 716 333, ⓦwww.archatheatre.cz. By far the most innovative venue in Prague, with two very versatile spaces, an art gallery and a café. The programming includes music, dance and theatre with an emphasis on the avant-garde.

Obecní dům – Smetanova síň

Náměstí Republiky 5 ⓣ222 002 105, ⓦwww.obecni-dum.cz. Fantastically ornate Art Nouveau concert hall which usually kicks off the Prague Spring festival, and is home to the excellent Prague Symphony Orchestra.

Prague State Opera (Státní opera Praha)

Wilsonova 4 ⓣ224 227 266, ⓦwww.opera.cz. A sumptuous nineteenth-century opera house, originally built by the city's German-speaking community. It's now the number-two venue for opera, with a repertoire that tends to focus on Italian pieces.

Národní and southern Nové Město

Off the conventional tourist trail, and boasting only a few minor sights, the network of cobbled streets immediately to the south of Národní are nevertheless great to explore, as they harbour a whole range of interesting cafés, pubs, restaurants and shops that have steadily colonised the area over the last decade or so. Southern Nové Město also boasts the city's finest stretch of waterfront, with a couple of leafy islands overlooked by magnificent turn-of-the-century mansions that continue almost without interruption south to Vyšehrad.

Jungmannovo náměstí

Jungmannovo náměstí is named for Josef Jungmann (1772–1847), a prolific writer, translator and leading light of the Czech national revival, whose pensive, seated statue surveys the small, ill-proportioned square. It boasts a couple of Czech architectural curiosities, starting with its unique Cubist streetlamp from 1912, beyond the Jungmann statue in the far eastern corner of the square. The square's most imposing building is the chunky, vigorously sculptured Palác Adria, designed in Rondo-Cubist style in the early 1920s, with sculptural extras by Otto Gutfreund.

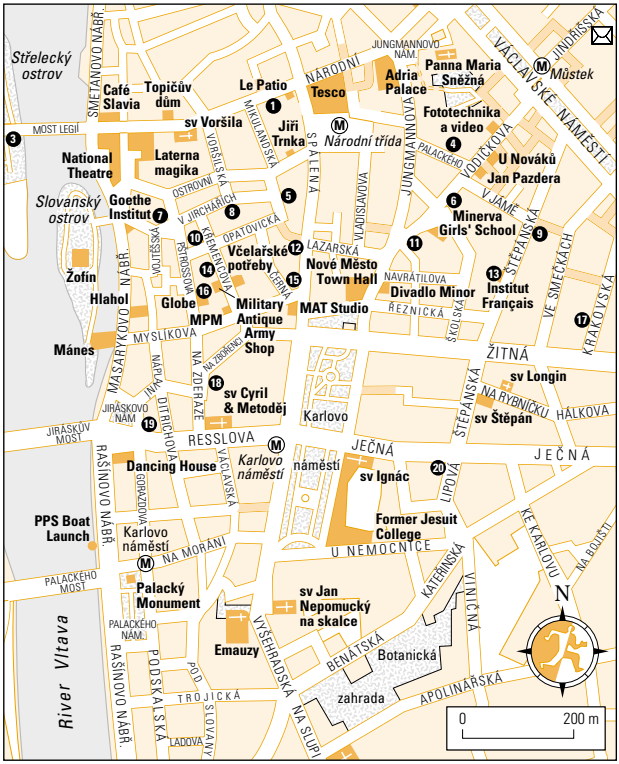
The building's *pasáž* (arcade) still retains its wonderful original portal featuring sculptures depicting the twelve signs of the zodiac. The theatre in the basement was once a studio for the multimedia Laterna magika (Magic Lantern) company. In 1989, it became the underground nerve centre of the Velvet Revolution (see below), where the Civic Forum thrashed out tactics in the dressing rooms and gave daily press conferences in the auditorium.

Church of Panna Maria Sněžná

Once one of the great landmarks of Wenceslas Square, the church is now barely visible from any of the surrounding streets. To enter the church, go through the archway beside the Austrian Cultural Institute, behind the statue of Jungmann, and across the courtyard beyond. Founded in the fourteenth century by Emperor Charles IV, who envisaged a vast coronation church on a scale comparable with the St Vitus Cathedral, only the chancel got built before the money ran out. The result is curious – a church which is short in length, but equal to the cathedral in height. The 100ft-high, prettily painted vaulting is awesome, as is the gold and black Baroque main altar which touches the ceiling.

Národní třída

It was on this busy street, lined with shops, galleries and clubs, that the Velvet Revolution began. On November 17,



EATING & DRINKING		Marathon	15	Tulip	10
Branický sklípek	6	Novoměstský pivovar	11	U Fleků	14
Break Café	9	Ostroff	3	U kotvy	12
Dynamo	7	Pivovarský dům	20	Velryba	5
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Lemon Leaf	18	Shabu	4	AghaRTA Jazz Centrum	17
Louvre	1	Slavia	2		

1989, a 50,000-strong student demonstration worked its way down Národní aiming to reach Wenceslas Square. Halfway down the street their way was barred by the Communist riot-police. The students sat down and refused to disperse, some of them handing flowers out to the police. Suddenly, without any warning, the police attacked and what became known as the masakr (massacre) began. In actual fact, no one was killed, though it wasn't for want of trying by the police. Under the arches of Národní 16, there's a small symbolic bronze relief of eight hands reaching out for help, a permanent shrine in memory of the hundreds who were hospitalized after the violence.

Further down Národní, on the right-hand side, is an eye-catching duo of Art Nouveau

buildings. The first, at no. 7, was built for the Prague Savings Bank, hence the beautiful mosaic lettering above the windows advertizing *život* (life insurance) and *kapital* (loans), as well as help with your *důchod* (pension) and *věno* (dowry). Next door, the slightly more ostentatious Topičův dům, headquarters of the official state publishers, provides the perfect accompaniment, with a similarly ornate wrought-iron and glass canopy.

National Theatre

Národní 2 www.narodni-divadlo.cz.

Overlooking the Vltava is the gold-crested National Theatre (Národní divadlo), proud symbol of the Czech nation. Refused money from the Habsburg state coffers, Czechs of all classes dug deep into their pockets to raise the funds. In June 1881, the theatre opened with a première of Smetana's *Libuše*. In August of the same year, fire ripped through the building, destroying everything except the outer walls. Within two years the whole thing was rebuilt and even the emperor contributed this time. The grand portal on the north side of the theatre is embellished with suitably triumphant allegorical figures, and, inside, every square inch is taken up with paintings and sculptures by leading artists of the Czech national revival.

Standing behind the old National Theatre, and in dramatic contrast with it, is the theatre's state-of-the-art extension, the opaque glass box of the Nová scéna, completed in 1983. It's one of those buildings most Praguers love to hate though compared to much of Prague's Communist-era architecture, it's not that bad.

Café Slavia

The *Café Slavia*, opposite the National Theatre, has been a favourite haunt of the city's writers, dissidents, artists and actors since the days of the First Republic. The Czech avant-garde movement, Devětsil, including Nobel Prize–winner Jaroslav Seifert, used to hold its meetings here in the 1920s. The café has been carelessly modernized since those arcadian days, but it still has a great riverside view and Manet's famous *Absinthe Drinker* canvas on the wall.

Vodičkova

Vodičkova is probably the most impressive street which heads south from Wenceslas Square. Of the handful of buildings worth checking out on the way, the most remarkable is U Nováků with its mosaic of bucolic frolicking and its delicate, ivy-like wrought-ironwork – look out for the frog-prince holding up a windowsill. Further down the street stands the imposing neo-Renaissance Minerva girls' school, covered in bright red sgraffito.

▲ NOVÁ SCÉNA

▲ U NOVÁKŮ, VODIČKOVA

Founded in 1866, it was the first such institution in Prague, and was notorious for the antics of its pupils, the "Minervans", who shocked bourgeois Czech society with their experimentation with fashion, drugs and sexual freedom.

Karlovo náměstí

Once Prague's biggest square, Karlovo náměstí's impressive proportions are no longer so easy to appreciate, obscured by trees and cut in two by a busy thoroughfare. It was created by Emperor Charles IV as Nové Město's cattle market and used by him for the grisly annual public display of his impressive collection of saintly relics, though now it actually signals the southern limit of the city's main commercial district and the beginning of predominantly residential Nové Město.

Church of sv Ignác

Karlovo náměstí. Begun in 1665, this former Jesuit church is quite remarkable inside, a pink and white confection, with lots of frothy stucco work and an exuberant pulpit dripping with gold drapery, cherubs and saints. The statue of St Ignatius, which sits above the entrance surrounded by a sunburst, caused controversy at the time, as until then only the Holy Trinity had been depicted in such a way.

Nové Město Town Hall

Karlovo náměstí 25. April–Sept daily 10am–5.30pm. 20Kč. Built in the fourteenth century, the Nové Město Town Hall (Novoměstská radnice) is one of the finest Gothic buildings in the city, sporting three impressive triangular gables embellished with intricate blind tracery. It was here that Prague's first defenestration took place on July 30, 1419, when the radical Hussite preacher Jan Želivský and his penniless religious followers stormed the building, mobbed the councillors and burghers, and threw twelve or thirteen of them (including the mayor) out of the town hall windows onto the pikes of the Hussite mob below, who clubbed any survivors to death. Václav IV, on hearing the news, suffered a stroke and died just two weeks later. So began the long and bloody Hussite Wars. After the amalgamation of Prague's separate towns in 1784, the building was used solely as a criminal court and prison. Nowadays, you can visit the site of the defenestration, and climb to the top of the tower (added shortly afterwards) for a view

▲ SV IGNÁC

over central Prague; the town hall also puts on temporary art exhibitions.

Cathedral of sv Cyril and Metoděj (Heydrich Martyrs' Monument)

Resslova 9 ⓣ224 920 686. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. 50Kč. Amid all the traffic, it's extremely difficult to imagine the scene at this church on June 18, 1942, when seven Czechoslovak secret agents were besieged in the church by hundreds of the Waffen SS. The agents had pulled off the dramatic assassination of Nazi leader Reinhard Heydrich, but had been betrayed by one of their own men. The Nazis surrounded the church just after 4am and fought a pitched battle for over six hours, trying explosives, flooding and any other method they could think of to drive the men out of their stronghold in the crypt. Eventually, all seven agents committed suicide rather than give themselves up. There's a plaque at street level on the south wall commemorating those who died, and an exhibition and video on the whole affair situated in the crypt itself, which has been left pretty much as it was; the entrance is underneath the church steps on Na Zderaze.

▲ NOVÉ MĚSTO TOWN HALL

Střelecký ostrov

Most Legií. The Střelecký ostrov, or Shooters' Island, is where the army held their shooting practice, on and off, from the fifteenth until the nineteenth century. Closer to the other bank, and accessible via most Legií (Legion's Bridge), it became a favourite spot for a Sunday promenade, and is still popular, especially in summer. The first May Day demonstrations took place here in 1890.

Slovanský ostrov (Slav Island)

Masarykovo nábřeží. This island was formed as a result of the natural silting of the river in the eighteenth century. It's commonly known as Žofín, after the island's very yellow cultural centre, built in 1835 and named for Sophie, the mother of Emperor Franz-Josef I. Concerts, balls and other social gatherings take place here in the cultural centre, and there's a good beer garden round the back; rowing boats can be hired in the summer.

At the southern tip of Slovanský ostrov stands the onion-domed Šítek water tower. Close by, spanning the narrow channel between the island and the river bank, is the striking, white functionalist box of the Mánes art gallery (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm). Designed in 1930, the gallery puts on consistently interesting contemporary exhibitions; in addition there's a café and an upstairs restaurant, suspended above the channel.

Dancing House

Rašínovo nábřeží. Designed by the Canadian-born Frank O. Gehry and the Yugoslav-born Vlado Milunič, this building is known

▲ HLAHOL, MASARYKOVO NÁBŘEŽÍ

as the Dancing House (Tančící dům) or "Fred and Ginger", after the shape of the building's two towers, which look vaguely like a couple ballroom dancing. The apartment block next door was built at the turn of the century by Havel's grandfather, and was where, until the early 1990s, Havel and his first wife, Olga, lived in the top-floor flat.

Palacký Monument

Palackého náměstí. After the Hus Monument this Monument to František Palacký, the great nineteenth-century Czech historian, politician and nationalist, is probably Prague's finest Art Nouveau sculpture. Fifteen years in the making, it was finally completed in 1912 and found universal disfavour. The critics have mellowed over the years, and nowadays it's appreciated for what it is – an energetic and inspirational piece of work. Ethereal bronze bodies, representing the world of the imagination, shoot out at all angles, contrasting sharply with the plain stone mass of the plinth, and below, the giant seated figure of Palacký himself, representing the real world.

Emauzy monastery

Vyšehradská. The intertwined concrete spires of the Emauzy monastery are an unusual modern addition to the Prague skyline. The monastery was one of the few important historical buildings to be damaged in the last war, in this case by a stray Anglo-American bomb (the pilot thought he was over Dresden). Founded by Emperor Charles IV, the cloisters contain some extremely valuable Gothic frescoes, but since the return of the monks from their forty-year exile, access has become unpredictable.

Vila Amerika (Dvořák Museum)

Ke Karlovu 20 ⓣ224 918 013. Tues–Sun: April–Sept 10am–1.30pm & 2–5.30pm; Oct–March 9.30am–1.30pm & 2–5pm. 40Kč. The russet-coloured Vila Amerika was originally named after the local pub, but is now a museum devoted to Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), the most famous of all Czech composers, who lived for a time on nearby Žitná. Even if you've no interest in Dvořák, the house itself is a delight, built as a Baroque summer palace around 1720. The tasteful period rooms, with the composer's music wafting in and out, and the tiny garden dotted with Baroque sculptures, compensate for what the display cabinets may lack.

Shops

Fototechnika a video

Vodičkova 36. Closed Sun. New photographic gear, plus an excellent selection of second-hand East German and Soviet equipment.

Globe

Pštrossova 6 ⓦwww.globebookstore.cz. The expat bookstore par excellence – both a social centre

and superbly well-stocked ramshackle shop, with an adjacent café (see below) and friendly staff.

Jan Pazdera

Vodičkova 28. Closed Sat & Sun. Truly spectacular selection of old and new cameras, microscopes, telescopes, opera glasses and binoculars.

Jiří Trnka

Ostrovní 21. Small shop stuffed with innovative wooden toys, wind-up tin vans, hot-air balloon lampshades and copious puzzles.

Le Patio

Národní 22. Arty wrought-ironwork, from chairs and chandeliers to bottle-racks and birdcages.

Military Antique Army Shop

Křemencova 7. Closed Sat & Sun. Bayonets, helmets, hand grenades, toy soldiers, knives, insignia and much much more.

MPM

Myslíkova 19 www.mpm.cz. Closed Sun. Kits for making model planes, tanks, trains, ships and cars, and toy soldiers.

Tesco

Národní 26. Modern department store on four floors, selling a good mix of Czech and imported goods – it bears absolutely no resemblance to its British supermarket namesake, beyond its neon sign.

Včelařské potřeby

Křemencova 8. Closed Sat & Sun. A beekeeper's paradise, with all the accoutrements required by an apiarist, plus a wide selection of honey.

Cafés

Break Café

Štěpánská 32. Closed Sun. Stylish, modern café, popular with expats: muffins, toast and croissants for breakfast; salads, burgers and grilled panini for lunch; and everything from bramborák to lasagne and oysters for dinner.

Globe

Pštrossova 6 www.globebookstore.cz. Large, buzzing café, at the back of the English-language bookstore of the same name, that's a serious expat hang-out, but enjoyable nevertheless.

Institut Français

Štěpánská 35 www.ifp.cz. Closed Sat & Sun. Housed in the French cultural centre; great coffee and superb French pastries, plus of course the chance to pose with a French newspaper, make this one of Prague's best cafés.

Louvre

Národní 20 www.kavarny.cz/louvre. Turn-of-the-century café, closed down in 1948, but now back in business and a very popular refuelling spot for Prague's shoppers. The high ceiling, daily papers, billiard hall and first-floor window seats overlooking Národní make up for the dodgy colour scheme.

Marathon

Černá 9. Closed Sat & Sun. Self-styled, smoky "library café" in the university's 1920s-design religious faculty, hidden in the backstreets south of Národní.

Shabu

Palackého 11. Tiny little café down a passageway, serving an interesting selection of Yugoslav

snacks such as grilled aubergine, Balkan salad and burek.

Slavia
Národní 1. Famous Prague riverside café that still pulls in a mixed crowd from shoppers and tourists to older folk and the pre- and post-theatre mob.

Velryba (The Whale)
Opatovická 24. Determinedly cool student café in Prague, not keen to entice tourists, but serving cheap Czech food (with veggie options) and a wide range of malt whiskies.

Restaurants

Dynamo
Pštrossova 29 ☎224 932 020. Eye-catching retro-1960s designer decor, an incredible single malt whisky selection and competent fish, chicken, steak and pasta dishes for 250Kč upwards make this place a trendy little spot.

Lemon Leaf
Na Zderaze 14 ☎224 919 056, ⓦwww.lemon.cz. Attractive, popular Thai restaurant, with hot and spicy meat and fish curries going for around 200Kč.

Ostroff
Střelecký ostrov ☎224 919 235, ⓦwww.ostroff.cz. Very popular basement Italian restaurant. Sleek, long bar and summer terrace overlooking the National Theatre from the island on the most Legií.

Pizzeria Kmotra (Godmother)
V jirchářích 12 ☎224 915 809, ⓦwww.kmotra.cz. This sweaty basement pizza place is one of Prague's most popular, and justifiably so – if possible book a table in advance.

Tulip
Opatovická 3 ☎224 930 019. Smart, dark, minimalist café-restaurant that's a hit with the expats: salads, sandwiches, lemon pepper chicken, fish and chips, stuffed aubergine, all for under 150Kč.

Pubs

Branický sklípek
Vodičkova 26. Convenient downtown pub decked out like a pine-furniture showroom, serving typical Czech fare, and jugs of Prague's Braník beer. The adjoining rough-and-ready *Branická formanka* next door opens and closes earlier.

Novoměstský pivovar
Vodičkova 20 ⓦwww.npivovar.cz. Micro-brewery which serves its own misty home brew, plus Czech food, in a series of bright, sprawling modern beer halls.

Pivovarksý dům
Corner of Lipová/Ječná. Busy micro-brewery dominated by big, shiny copper vats, serving light, mixed and dark unfiltered beer (plus banana, coffee and wheat varieties), and all the standard Czech pub dishes (including pivný sýr).

Potrefená husa (The Wounded Goose)
Jiráskovo náměstí 1. Smart, convivial brick cellar pub that

▼ MARATHON CAFÉ

attracts a mix of young and middle-aged professionals; Staropramen and decent pub food on offer.

U Fleků

Křemencova 11. Famous medieval *pivnice* where the unique dark 13° beer, Flek, has been exclusively brewed and consumed since 1499. Seats over 500 German tourists at a go, serves short measures (0.4l), slaps an extra charge on for the music and still you might have to queue to get in. This is a real tourist trap and the only reason to visit is to sample the beer, which you're best off doing during the day.

U kotvy (The Anchor)

Spálená 11. All-night spot that's perfect for a last Staropramen before you attempt to work out how to catch a night tram home.

Performing arts and film

Divadlo minor

Vodičkova 6 ☎222 231 351. Excellent puppet theatre that puts on children's puppet shows most days, plus adult shows on occasional evenings – sometimes with English subtitles.

Laterna magika (Magic Lantern)

Nová scéna, Národní 4 ☎224 931 482, www.laterna.cz. The National Theatre's Nová scéna, one of Prague's most modern and versatile stages, is now the main base for Laterna magika, founders of multimedia theatre way back in 1958, now slick and professional rather than ground-breaking.

MAT Studio

Karlovo náměstí 19 ☎224 915 765, www.mat.cz. Café and cinema popular with the film crowd, with an eclectic programme of shorts, documentaries and Czech films with English subtitles. Entrance is on Odborů.

National Theatre (Národní divadlo)

Národní 2 ☎224 901 487, www.narodni-divadlo.cz. Prague's grandest nineteenth-century theatre is the living embodiment of the Czech national revival movement, and continues to put on a wide variety of mostly, though by no means exclusively, Czech plays, plus the odd opera and ballet. Worth visiting for the decor alone.

Clubs and live music

AghaRTA Jazz Centrum

Krakovská 5 ☎222 211 275, www.agharta.cz. Probably the best jazz club in Prague, with a good mix of Czechs and foreigners, and a consistently good programme of gigs.

▲ U FLEKŮ

Vyšehrad, Vinohrady and Žižkov

The fortress of Vyšehrad makes for a perfect afternoon escape away from the human congestion of the city centre: its cemetery shelters the remains of Bohemia's artistic elite; the ramparts afford superb views over the river; and below the fortress, there are several examples of Czech Cubist architecture. Vinohrady, to the east, is a late nineteenth-century residential suburb, dominated by long streets of grandiose apartment blocks, with one or two specific sights to guide your wandering. By contrast, Žižkov, further north, is a grittier working-class district, whose shabby, slightly seedy streets contain some of the city's best pubs and clubs.

Vyšehrad

www.praha-vysehrad.cz. The rocky red-brick fortress of Vyšehrad – literally "High Castle" – has more myths attached to it than any other place in Bohemia. According to Czech legend, this is the place where the Slav tribes first settled in Prague, where the "wise and tireless chieftain" Krok built a castle, whence his youngest daughter Libuše went on to found Praha itself. Alas, the archeological evidence doesn't really bear this claim out. What you see now are the remains of a fortified barracks built by the Habsburgs and then turned into a public park.

You can explore the fortress dungeons or kasematy (daily: April–Oct 9.30am–6pm; Nov–March 9.30am–5pm; 20Kč), which you enter via the northern entrance or Cihelná brána. After a short guided tour of a section of the underground passageways underneath the ramparts, you enter a vast storage hall, which shelters several of the original statues from the Charles Bridge, and, when the lights are switched off, reveals a camera obscura image of a tree.

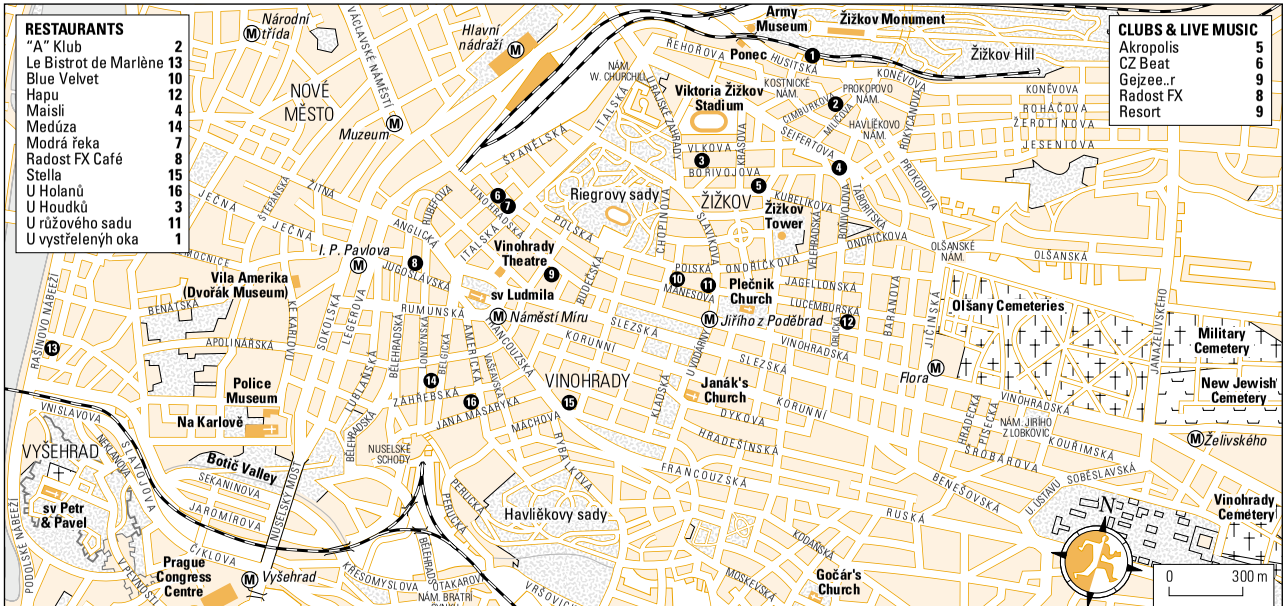
Church of sv Petr and Pavel

Sat & Sun 10am–noon & 1–4pm. Free.

The fortress's chief landmark is this blackened sandstone church, rebuilt in the 1880s in neo-Gothic style on the site of an eleventh-century basilica.

Getting to Vyšehrad

Get off tram #3, #7, #16, #17 or #21, at Výtoň, and either wind your way up Vratislavova to the Cihelná brána or take the steep stairway from Rašínovo nábřeží that leads up through the trees. Alternatively, from Vyšehrad metro station, walk west past the ugly Congress Centre, and enter via V pevnosti, where there's an information centre (daily: April–Oct 9.30am–6pm; Nov–March 9.30am–5pm).


RESTAURANTS
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Blue Velvet 10
Hapu 12
Maisli 4
Medúza 14
Modrá řeka 7
Radost FX Café 8
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NOVÉ MĚSTO
Muzeum
Riegrovy sady
ŽIŽKOV
Žižkov Tower
Vinohrady Theatre
sv Ludmila
Náměstí Míru
I. P. Pavlova
Vila Amerika (Dvořák Museum)
Plečník Church
Jiřího z Poděbrad
Olšany Cemeteries
Military Cemetery
New Jewish Cemetery
Flora
Želivského
Vinohrady Cemetery
Police Museum
Na Karlově
VINOHRADY
Janák's Church
VYŠEHRAD
Botič Valley
sv Petr & Pavel
Prague Congress Centre
Vyšehrad
Havlíčkovy sady
Gočár's Church
0
300 m

▲ SV PETR AND PAVEL

The twin open-work spires are now the fortress's most familiar landmark, and if luck is on your side, you should be able to view the church's polychrome interior, though opening times can be a bit erratic.

Vyšehrad Cemetery (Vyšehradský hřbitov)

Daily: March, April & Oct 8am–6pm; May–Sept 8am–7pm; Nov–Feb 9am–4pm. Most Czechs come to Vyšehrad to pay a visit to the cemetery. It's a measure of the part that artists and intellectuals played in the foundation of the nation, and the regard in which they are still held, that the most prestigious graveyard in the city is given over to them: no soldiers, no politicians, not even the Communists managed to muscle their way in here (except on artistic merit). Sheltered from the wind by its high walls, lined on two sides by delicate arcades, it's a tiny cemetery (reflecting, as it were, the size of the nation) filled with well-kept graves, many of them designed by the country's leading sculptors.

To the uninitiated only a handful of figures are well known, but for the Czechs the place is alive with great names (there's a useful plan of the most notable graves at the entrance nearest the church). Ladislav Šaloun's grave for Dvořák, situated under the arches, is one of the more showy ones, with a mosaic inscription, studded with gold stones, glistening behind wrought-iron railings. Smetana, who died twenty years earlier, is buried in comparatively modest surroundings near the Slavín Monument, the cemetery's focal point, which is the communal resting place of more than fifty Czech artists, including the painter Alfons Mucha and the opera singer Ema Destinová.

The grave of the Romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha was the assembly point for the demonstration on November 17, 1989, which triggered the Velvet Revolution (see p.106).

▼ VYŠEHRAD CEMETERY

Cubist villas

Even if you harbour only a passing interest in modern architecture, it's worth seeking out the cluster of Cubist villas below the fortress in Vyšehrad. The most impressive example is the apartment block at Neklanova 30, begun in 1913, which brilliantly exploits its angular location. Further along Neklanova at no. 2, there's another Cubist facade, and around the corner is the most ambitious of the lot, the Kovařovicova vila, which uses prism shapes and angular lines to produce the sharp geometric contrasts of light and dark shadows characteristic of Cubist painting.

Prague Congress Centre

5 května 65 ⓣ261 171 111, ⓦwww.kcp.cz. The Prague Congress Centre (Kongresové centrum) is a low-lying, supremely ugly concrete carbuncle, formerly known as the Palác kultury and originally used for Communist Party congresses. It remains the country's biggest concert venue, but the best thing about it is the view north over the Nuselský most, which spans the Botič valley, to Na Karlově church (see p.118).

Police Museum

Ke Karlovu 1 ⓣ224 922 183, ⓦwww.mvcr.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. 20Kč. The former Augustinian monastery of Karlov houses the Muzeum Policie, which concentrates on road and traffic offences, and the force's latest challenges: forgery, drugs and murder. It's mildly diverting, with several participatory displays, including a quiz on the Highway Code (in Czech), a mini road layout for kids' trikes and bikes, and a particularly gruesome section on forensic science.

Na Karlově church

Ke Karlovu. Founded by Emperor Charles IV and designed in imitation of Charlemagne's tomb in Aachen, this church is quite unlike any other in Prague. If it's open, you should take a look at the dark interior, which was remodelled in the sixteenth century by Bonifaz Wohlmut. The stellar vault has no central supporting pillars – a remarkable feat of engineering for its time, and one which gave rise to numerous legends about the architect being in league with the devil.

Náměstí Míru

If Vinohrady has a centre, it's the leafy square of náměstí Míru, a good introduction to the aspirations of this confident, bourgeois neighbourhood. At its centre stands the brick-built basilica of sv Ludmila, designed in the late 1880s in a severe neo-Gothic style, though the

▲ PLEČNIK'S CHURCH

interior furnishings have the odd flourish of Art Nouveau. In front of the church is a statue commemorating the Čapek brothers, writer Karel and painter Josef, who together symbolized the golden era of the interwar republic. Karel died in 1938, shortly after the Nazi invasion, while Josef perished in Belsen seven years later; their influence was deliberately underplayed by the Communists, and the memorial was erected only in the 1990s. Two more buildings on the square deserve attention, the most flamboyant being the Vinohrady Theatre (Divadlo na Vinohradech), built in 1907, using Art Nouveau and neo-Baroque elements in equal measure. More subdued, but equally ornate inside and out, is the district's former Národní dům, a grandiose neo-Renaissance edifice from the 1890s housing a ballroom/concert hall and restaurant.

Plečnik's church

Náměstí Jiřího z Poděbrad. Prague's most celebrated modern church is Nejsvětější Srdce Páně (Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord), built in 1928 by the Slovene architect Josip Plečnik. It's a marvellously eclectic and individualistic work, employing a sophisticated potpourri of architectural styles: a Neoclassical pediment and a great slab of a clock tower with a giant transparent face in imitation of a Gothic rose window, as well as the bricks and mortar of contemporary constructivism. Plečnik also had a sharp eye for detail; look out for the little gold crosses inset into the brickwork like stars, inside and out, and the celestial orbs of light suspended above the heads of the congregation.

▲ ŽIŽKOV TV TOWER

Žižkov TV tower (Televizní vysílač)

www.tower.cz. Daily 10am–11.30pm. 150Kč. At over 100m in height, the Žižkov tower, is the tallest (and the most unpopular) building in Prague. Close up, it's an intimidating futuristic piece of architecture, made all the more disturbing by the addition of several statues of giant babies crawling up the sides, courtesy of artist David Černý. Begun in the 1970s in a desperate bid to jam West German television transmission, the tower became fully operational only in the 1990s. In the course of its construction, however, the Communists saw fit to demolish part of a nearby Jewish cemetery, that had served the community between 1787 and 1891; a small section survives to the northwest of the tower. From the fifth-floor café or the viewing platform on the eighth floor, you can enjoy a spectacular view across Prague.

Olšany cemeteries (Olšany hřbitovy)

Vinohradská. Daily dawn–dusk. Free.

The vast Olšany cemeteries were originally created for the victims of the great plague epidemic of 1680. The perimeter walls are lined with glass cabinets, stacked like shoe-boxes, containing funereal urns and mementoes, while the graves themselves are a mixed bag of artistic achievements, reflecting the funereal fashions of the day as much as the character of the deceased. The cemeteries are divided into districts and crisscrossed with cobbled streets; at each gate there's a map, and an aged janitor ready to point you in the right direction.

The cemeteries' two most famous incumbents are an ill-fitting couple: Klement Gottwald, the country's first Communist president, whose remains were removed from the mausoleum on Žižkov hill after 1989 and reinterred here; and Jan Palach, the philosophy student who set light to himself in January 1969 in protest at the Soviet occupation. More than 750,000 people attended Palach's funeral in January 1969, and in an attempt to put a stop to the annual vigils at his graveside, the secret police removed his body and reburied him in his home town outside Prague. In 1990, Palach's body was returned to Olšany; you'll find it just to the east of the main entrance.

New Jewish Cemetery (Nový židovský hřbitov)

Fibichova. Mon–Thurs & Sun 9am–5pm, Fri 9am–2pm. 20Kč. Founded in the 1890s, the New Jewish Cemetery was designed to last for a century, with room for 100,000 graves. It's a melancholy spot, particularly so in the east of the cemetery, where large empty allotments wait in vain to be filled by the generation that perished in the Holocaust. Most people come here to visit Franz Kafka's grave, 400m east along the south wall and signposted from the entrance. He is buried, along with his mother and father (both of whom outlived him), beneath a plain headstone; the plaque below commemorates his three sisters who died in the camps.

Žižkov Hill

Žižkov Hill is the thin green wedge of land that separates Žižkov from Karlín, the grid-plan industrial district to the north. From its westernmost point, which juts out almost to the edge of Nové Město, is the definitive panoramic view over the city centre. It was here, on July 14, 1420, that the Hussites enjoyed their first and finest victory at the Battle of Vítkov, under the inspired leadership of the one-eyed general, Jan Žižka (hence the name of the district). Ludicrously outnumbered by more than ten to one, Žižka and his fanatically motivated troops thoroughly trounced the Bohemian King and Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund and his papal forces.

Despite its totalitarian aesthetics, the giant concrete Žižkov monument (guided tours first Sat of the month, except July & Aug, 2pm; 30Kč; ⓣ222 781 676, ⓦwww.pamatnik-vitkov.cz), which graces the crest of the hill, was actually built between the wars as a memorial to the Czechoslovak Legion who fought against the Habsburgs in the First World War – the gargantuan statue

▲ ARMY MUSEUM

of the mace-wielding Žižka, which fronts the monument, is reputedly the world's largest equestrian statue. The building was later used by the Nazis as an arsenal, and eventually became a Communist mausoleum. In 1990, the Communists were cremated and quietly reinterred in Olšany, and at present there's an ongoing legal battle over what should happen next with the monument.

Army Museum (Armádní muzeum)

U památníku 2 Ⓦwww.military museum.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Free. Guarded by a handful of unmanned tanks, howitzers and armoured vehicles, the Army Museum has a permanent exhibition covering the country's military history from 1914 onwards. A fairly evenly balanced account of both world wars includes coverage of controversial subjects such as the exploits of the Czechoslovak Legion, the Heydrich assassination and the 1945 Prague Uprising.

Cafés

Blue Velvet

Čerchovská 4 Ⓦwww.bluevelvet .cz. Czech literary café housed in an arty bookshop with a busy programme of readings, discussions and folk/jazz/blues concerts.

Medúza

Belgická 17. A trendy young crowd hang out in this deliberately faded, inexpensive café, which serves breakfast all day and is packed most evenings.

Radost FX Café

Bělehradská 120 Ⓦwww.radostfx .cz. Clubbers' café with a good choice of veggie dishes and late opening hours; popular with the expat posse, particularly for its Sunday brunch.

Restaurants

Le Bistrot de Marlène

Plavecká 4 ⓣ224 921 853. Closed Sun. Very good rustic French cuisine in a pleasant little restaurant with excellent service, in the backstreets near Vyšehrad.

Mailsi

Lipanská 1 ⓣ222 717 783. Very friendly Pakistani restaurant in Žižkov that serves up curries for around 300Kč, as hot as you can handle.

Modrá řeka (Blue River)

Mánesova 13 ⓣ222 251 601. Closed Sun. Family-run Bosnian Muslim restaurant with attentive service, and good Balkan home cooking.

Pubs and bars

"A" Klub

Milíčova 32 ⓣ222 781 623. The city's premier lesbian bar with women-only Friday nights. It's small but stylish and definitely worth checking out.

Hapu
Orlická 8. Closed Sun. Chilled-out Žižkov cocktail bar without the snooty factor; lots of great mixes and comfy sofas in which to sink.

Stella
Lužická 10. One of the most popular and relaxed mixed gay/lesbian evening hot spots in the capital – ring the bell to gain entry.

U Holanů
Londýnská 10. Popular neighbourhood pub with a leafy outdoor terrace – order your Plzeň beer and pub grub inside.

U Houdků
Bořivojova 110. Friendly pub in the heart of Žižkov with a beer garden, Velkopopvický kozel on tap and cheap Czech food.

U růžového sadu (The Rose Garden)
Mánesova 89. Imaginatively decorated for a Czech pub and perfectly situated if you're visiting Plečnik's Church.

U vystřelenýho oka (The Shot-Out Eye)
U božích bojovníků 3. Big, loud, smoky, heavy-drinking late-night pub just south of Žižkov Hill, with (unusually) good music and lashings of Měšťán beer, plus absinthe chasers.

Performing arts and film

Aero
Biskupcova 31 www.kinoaero.cz. Crumbling art-house cinema that runs rolling mini-festivals, interspersed with more popular mainstream movies.

Ponec
Husitská 24a www.divadloponec.cz. Former cinema, now innovative dance venue and centre for the annual Tanec Praha dance festival.

Clubs and live music

Akropolis
Kubelíkova 27 www.akropolis.cz. Prague's very popular smoke-filled world music venue is also a great place to just have a drink or a bite to eat, as well as checking out the live gigs.

CZ Beat
Balbínova 26. Cavernous underground club frequented by the best Prague DJs on the circuit, and their young, hip followers.

Gejzee..r
Vinohradská www.gejzeer.cz. Thurs–Sat only. Prague's largest and most popular gay club with dance floor, DJs and the inevitable darkroom.

Radost FX
Bělehradská 120 224 254 776, www.radostfx.cz. Still the slickest (and longest-running) all-round dance club venue in Prague, attracting the usual mix of clubbers and despots.

Resort
Vinohradská 40 www.resort.cz. This maze-like basement club attracts top DJs and a very trendy Czech crowd of dance music lovers.

Holešovice

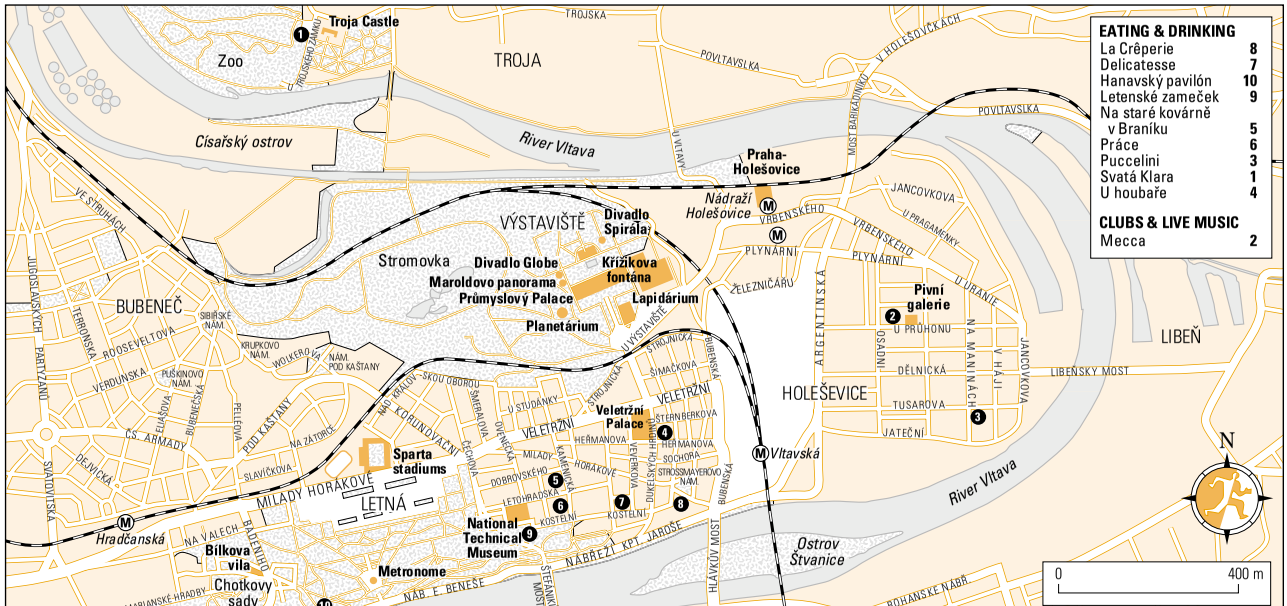
Tucked into a huge U-bend in the River Vltava, the late nineteenth-century suburb of Holešovice boasts two huge splodges of green: Letná, overlooking the city centre, and to the north, Stromovka, the city's largest public park, bordering the Výstaviště funfair and trade fair grounds. A stroll through the park gives you access to the Baroque chateau of Troja and the city's leafy zoo. However, the single most important sight in Holešovice is the Veletržní Palace, which houses the city's main Museum of Modern Art. Only a trickle of tourists make it out here, but it's worth the effort, if only to remind yourself that Prague doesn't begin and end at the Charles Bridge.

Veletržní Palace (Trade Fair Palace)

Dukelských hrdinů 47 ⓣ224 301 111, ⓦwww.ngprague.cz. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. 200Kč. The Veletržní Palace gets nothing like the number of visitors it should. For not only does the building house the city's best nineteenth- and twentieth-century Czech and international art collection, it is also an architectural sight in itself. Built in 1928, it is Prague's ultimate functionalist masterpiece, not so much from the outside, but inside, where its gleaming white vastness is suitably awesome.

The gallery is both big and bewildering, and virtually impossible to view in its entirety. Special exhibitions occupy the ground, first and fifth floors, while the permanent collection occupies the second, third and fourth floors. The popular French art collection can be found on the third floor, and includes works by Rodin, Renoir, Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso. Also on this floor, you'll find works by the Czech Cubists Čapek, Gutfreund, Filla and Kubišta, and a whole series of works by František Kupka, by far the most important Czech painter of the last century, who secured his place in the history of art by being (possibly) the first artist in the western world to exhibit abstract paintings. The rest of the "foreign art" is on the first floor, where you'll get to see, among other things, a Surrealist Miró, a couple of Henry Moore sculptures and a perforated Lucio Fontana canvas, plus a few canvases by Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele and Munch, whose influence on early twentieth-century Czech art was considerable.

In the nineteenth-century collection, on the fourth floor, you'll find an exhaustive overview of Czech art of the period, while the second floor collection takes you from 1930 to the present day – it, too, is mostly Czech in origin, and gives a pretty good introduction to the country's artistic peaks and troughs. Fans of Communist kitsch should make their way to the excellent Socialist Realism section, heralded by Karel Pokorný's monumental *Fraternisation* sculpture, in


Troja Castle
Zoo
TROJA
TROJSKÁ
U TROJSKÉHO ZÁMKU
Císařský ostrov
River Vltava
POVLTAVSKÁ
V HOLEŠOVIČKÁCH
MOST BARIKÁDNÍKŮ
Praha-Holešovice
Nádraží Holešovice
VRBENSKÉHO
JANCOVKOVA
U PRAGAMENKY
PLYNÁRNÍ
U ÚRANIE
VÝSTAVIŠTĚ
Divadlo Spirála
Stromovka
Divadlo Globe
Maroldovo panorama
Průmyslový Palace
Křižíkova fontána
Lapidárium
Planetárium
ŽELEZNIČÁŘŮ
Pivní galerie
BUBENEČ
VE STRUHÁCH
JUGOSLÁVSKÝCH PARTYZÁNŮ
TERRONSKÁ
RODOS VELTOVA
SIBIŘSKÉ NÁM.
KRUPKOVO NÁM.
WOLKERO NÁM.
NÁM. PODE KAŠTANY
VERDUNSKÁ
PUŠKINOVO NÁM.
ELIÁŠOVA
BUBENEČSKÁ
PELLÉOVA
PODE KAŠTANY
ČS. ARMÁDY
NA ZÁTORCE
SLAVÍČKOVA
DEJVICKÁ
SVATOVITSKÁ
MILADY HORÁKOVÉ
LETNÁ
Hradčanská
NA VÁLCÍCH
BÁRDOVA
Bílkova vila
Chotkovy sady
MARIÁNSKÉ HRADBY
Metronome
NÁB. E. BENEŠE
Sparta stadiums
KORUNOVAČNÍ
SMETANOVA
DĚKANSKÁ
U STUDÁNKY
VELETRŽNÍ
Veletržní Palace
HERMANOVA
SOCHOROVA
STROSSMAYEROVO NÁM.
ŠTERNBERKOVA
OSTROMÍNSKÁ
ŠIMÁČKOVA
BUBENSKÁ
DUKELSKÝCH HRDINŮ
VOLNÁ
KAMENICKÁ
DOBROVSKÉHO
HORÁKOVÉ
LETOHRADSKÁ
KOSTELNÍ
National Technical Museum
NÁBŘEŽÍ KPT. JAROŠE
STAŇKOVU MOSTU
HLÁVKŮV MOST
Ostrov Štvanice
ROHANSKÉ NÁBŘ.
HOLEŠOVICE
ARGENTINSKÁ
OSADNÍ
DĚLNICKÁ
TUSAROVA
JATEČNÍ
U PRŮHONU
NÁ MANÍNÁCH
V HÁJI
JANCOVKOVA
LIBEŇSKÝ MOST
LIBEŇ
Vltavská
River Vltava
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EATING & DRINKING
La Crêperie 8
Delicatesse 7
Hanavský pavilón 10
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Na staré kovárně v Braníku 5
Práce 6
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CLUBS & LIVE MUSIC
Mecca 2

which a Czechoslovak soldier is engaging in a "kiss of death" with a Soviet comrade. Performance art (umění akce) was big in the 1960s, even in Communist Czechoslovakia, and it, too, has its own section, which is undoubtedly worth a giggle. The gallery also owns several works by Jiří Kolář – pronounced "collage" – who, coincidentally, specializes in collages of random words and reproductions of other people's paintings.

National Technical Museum (Národní technické muzeum)

Kostelní 42 ☎220 399 111, ⓦwww.ntm.cz. Tues–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm. 70Kč. Despite its dull title, this museum is surprisingly interesting, with an interactive gallery or two, and the odd English caption appearing here and there. Its showpiece hanger-like main hall contains an impressive gallery of motorbikes, Czech and foreign, and a wonderful collection of old planes, trains and automobiles from Czechoslovakia's industrial heyday between the wars when the country's Škoda cars and Tatra soft-top stretch limos were really something to brag about. The oldest car in the collection is Laurin & Klement's 1898 Präsident, more of a motorized carriage than a car; the museum also boasts the oldest Bugatti in the world. Upstairs, there are interactive displays (a rarity in a Czech museum) tracing the development of early photography, and a collection of some of Kepler's and Tycho Brahe's astrological instruments. In the basement, a mock-up of a coal mine offers guided tours (11am, 1pm & 3pm).

Letná

A high plateau hovering above the city, the flat green expanse of the Letná plain has long been the traditional assembly point for invading and besieging armies. Under the Communists, it was used primarily for the annual May Day parades, during which thousands trudged past the Sparta Prague stadium, where the Communist leaders would salute from their giant red podium. It once boasted the largest Stalin monument in the world: a 30m-high granite sculpture portraying a procession of Czechs

▲ MAIN HALL, TECHNICAL MUSEUM

and Russians being led to Communism by the Pied Piper figure of Stalin, but popularly dubbed tlačenice (the crush) because of its resemblance to a Communist-era bread queue. The monument was unveiled on May 1, 1955, but within a year Khrushchev had denounced Stalin, and the monument was blown up in 1962.

On the other side of the plain, overlooking the Vltava stands David Černý's symbolic giant red metronome (which is lit up at night), occupying the platform once graced by the giant Stalin statue.

Bílkova vila

Mieckiewiczova 1. May–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Nov–April Sat & Sun 10am–5pm. 50Kč. The Bílkova vila honours one of the most original of all Czech sculptors, František Bílek (1872–1941). Built in 1911 to the artist's own design, the house was intended as both a "cathedral of art" and the family home. Inside, Bílek's extravagant religious sculptures line the walls of his "workshop and temple". In addition to his sculptural and relief work in wood and stone, often wildly expressive and spiritually tortured, there are also ceramics, graphics and a few mementoes of Bílek's life. His living quarters have also been restored and have much of the original wooden furniture, designed and carved by Bílek himself, still in place. Check out the dressing table for his wife, shaped like some giant church lectern, and the wardrobe decorated with a border of hearts, a penis, a nose, an ear and an eye plus the sun, stars and moon.

▼ BÍLKOVA VILLA

Chotkovy sady

Prague's first public park, the Chotkovy sady, was founded in 1833 by the ecologically minded city governor, Count Chotek. The atmosphere here is relaxed and you can happily stretch out on the grass and soak up the sun, or head for the south wall, for an unrivalled view of the bridges and islands of the Vltava. At the centre of the park there's a bizarre, melodramatic grotto-like memorial to the nineteenth-century Romantic poet Julius Zeyer, an elaborate monument from which life-sized characters from Zeyer's works, carved in white marble, emerge from the blackened rocks.

Výstaviště (Exhibition Grounds)

Dukelských hrdinů. Tues–Fri 2–9pm, free; Sat & Sun 10am–9pm, 20Kč. Since the 1891 Prague Exhibition, Výstaviště has served as the city's main trade fair arena and funfair. At the centre of the complex is the flamboyant stained-glass and wrought-iron Průmyslový palác, scene of Communist Party rubber-stamp congresses. Several modern structures were built for the 1991 Prague Exhibition, including a circular theatre,

▲ JULIUS ZEYER MEMORIAL, CHOTKOVY SADY

Divadlo Spirála, and Divadlo Globe, a reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London.

The grounds are busiest at the weekend, particularly in summer, when hordes of Prague families descend on the place to wolf down hot dogs and drink beer. Apart from the annual trade fairs and special exhibitions, there are a few permanent attractions: the city's Planetárium (Mon–Fri 8.30am–noon & 1–8pm, Sat & Sun 9.30am–noon & 1–8pm; 20Kč; ⓦ www.planetarium.cz), which has static displays and shows videos; the Maroldovo panorama (Tues–Fri 2–5pm, Sat & Sun 11am–5pm; 20Kč), a giant diorama of the 1434 Battle of Lipany; and the Lunapark, a run-down funfair and playground for kids. In the long summer evenings, there's also an open-air cinema (letní kino), and hourly evening performances by the Křižíkova fontána (ⓦ www.krizikovafontana.cz), dancing fountains devised for the 1891 Exhibition by the Czech inventor František Křižík.

Lapidárium

Výstaviště 422 ⓣ 233 375 636, ⓦ www.nm.cz. Tues–Fri noon–6pm, Sat & Sun 10am–6pm. 40Kč.

Official depository for the city's sculptures, which are under threat either from demolition or from the weather, the Lapidárium houses a much overlooked collection, ranging from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. Some of the statues saved from the perils of Prague's polluted atmosphere, such as the bronze equestrian statue of St George, will be familiar if you've visited Prague Castle; others are more difficult to inspect closely in their original sites, for example the figures from the towers of the Charles Bridge. Many of the original statues from the bridge can be seen here, as well as the ones that were fished out of the Vltava after the flood of 1890.

One of the most outstanding sights is what remains of the

▼ VÝSTAVIŠTĚ

▲ KROCÍN FOUNTAIN

Krocín fountain, a highly ornate Renaissance work in red marble, which used to grace Staroměstské náměstí (see p.80). Several pompous imperial monuments that were bundled into storage after the demise of the Habsburgs in 1918 round off the museum's collection. By far the most impressive is the bronze statue of Marshall Radecký, scourge of the 1848 revolution, carried aloft on a shield by eight Habsburg soldiers.

Stromovka

Originally laid out as hunting grounds for the noble occupants of the Castle, Stromovka is now Prague's largest and leafiest public park. If you're heading north for Troja and the city zoo, a stroll through the park is by far the most pleasant approach. If you want to explore a little more of the park, head west sticking to the park's southern border and you'll eventually come to a neo-Gothic former royal hunting chateau, which served as the seat of the Governor of Bohemia until 1918.

Troja Chateau (Trojský zámek)

U trojského zámku 1. April–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Nov–March Sat & Sun 10am–5pm. 40Kč. The chateau was designed by Jean-Baptiste Mathey for the powerful Šternberg family towards the end of the seventeenth century. The best features of the rusty-red Baroque facade are the monumental balustrades, where blackened figures of giants and titans battle it out. To visit the interior, you must join a guided tour. The star exhibits are the gushing frescoes depicting the victories of the Habsburg Emperor Leopold I (who reigned from 1657 to 1705) over the Turks, which cover every inch of the walls and ceilings of the grand hall. You also get to wander through the chateau's pristine, trend-setting, French-style formal gardens, the first of their kind in Bohemia.

Getting to Troja and the Zoo

You can either walk from Výstaviště, catch bus #112, which runs hourly from metro Nádraží Holešovice, or take a boat (April, Sept & Oct Sat & Sun 3 daily; May–Aug 4 daily; 80Kč; www.paroplavba.cz) from the PPS landing place on Rašínovo nábřeží, metro Karlovo náměstí – see map on p.107.

Prague Zoo

U trojského zámku 3 ⓣ296 112 111, ⓦwww.zoopraha.cz. Daily: March 9am–5pm; April, May, Sept & Oct 9am–6pm; June–Aug 9am–7pm; Nov–Feb 9am–4pm. 80Kč. Founded in 1931 on the site of one of Troja's numerous hillside vineyards, Prague's capacious zoo is trying its best to upgrade its animal enclosures. All the usual animals are on show here – including elephants, hippos, giraffes, zebras, big cats and bears – and kids, at least, will have few problems enjoying themselves. In the summer, you can take a chairlift (lanová dráha) from the duck pond to the top of the hill, where the prize exhibits – a rare breed of miniature horse known as Przewalski – hang out.

Shops

Pivní galerie

U Průhonu 9. Closed Sun. The largest selection of bottled Czech beers in the capital, which you can drink in the shop or take away. All under 30Kč a throw.

Cafés

Delicatesse

Kostelní 16 ⓦwww.delicatesse.cz. Closed Sat & Sun. French bakery serving hot and cold sandwiches, quiche and pastries; they also deliver for a small fee.

Restaurants

La Crêperie

Janovského 4 ⓣ220 878 040. Stylish inexpensive French-run crêperie serving sweet and savoury pancakes, French liqueurs and even the rare Nová Paka beer.

Hanavský pavilón

Letenské sady 173 ⓣ233 323 641, ⓦwww.mujweb.cz/www/hanavsky-pavilon. Highly ornate Art Nouveau pleasure pavilion high above the Vltava, with stunning views and a gamey Czech menu (main courses 600–700Kč).

Puccelini

Tusarova 52 ⓣ283 871 134. Quirky Italian restaurant producing excellent pasta dishes and wood-fired pizzas for around 400–500Kč.

Svatá Klara (Saint Clare)

U Trojského zámku 35 ⓣ602 373 414. Romantic wine-cave setting for this formal, evening-only restaurant, specialising in game dishes for around 500Kč.

▲ TRAMS

▲ DIVADLO GLOBE

Pubs

Letenský zámeček

www.letenskyzamecek.cz. Great beer garden serving draught Velkopopovický kozel, and slightly upgraded Czech pub food, including some veggie options, in the *Ullman* restaurant inside.

Na staré kovárně v Braníku (The Old Blacksmith's in Braník)

Kamenická 17. Popular, zany local pub, with a playful menu of meaty, daily dishes, washed down with Plzeň beers and good, loud rock music.

Práce

Kamenická 9. Small late-night bar with lots of Communist memorabilia, including a portrait of Stalin overlooking the table football.

U houbaře (The Mushroom)

Dukelských hrdinů 30. Comfortable, wonderfully normal pub serving Pilsner Urquell and pub grub and perfectly placed for the Veletržní Palace.

Performing arts and film

Divadlo Globe

Výstaviště ☎222 711 515, May–Sept only. Reconstruction of the wooden Globe Theatre in London, where Shakespeare aired so many of his works; puts on open-air performances of the Bard's works in summer.

Divadlo Spirála

Výstaviště. Spectacular 360-degree theatre that puts on suitably stagey shows (mostly musicals).

Clubs and live music

Mecca

U Průhonu 3 www.mecca.cz. This converted factory is one of the biggest, best and most popular clubs in Prague. There's a half-decent restaurant during the day, and a chill-out basement when the dancing kicks in.

Accommodation

Hotels and pensions

Compared to the price of almost everything else in Prague, accommodation is very expensive. If you're looking for a double and can pay around 5000Kč (£100/$200), then you'll find plenty of choice, but there's a chronic shortage of decent, inexpensive to middle-range places. One way round this is to search the Internet for special offers, which can often undercut the rack rates considerably.

All accommodation prices in this chapter are for the cheapest double room in the high season. Rooms are en suite and breakfast is included unless otherwise stated.

Hradčany

Questenberk Úvoz 5 ⓣ220 407 600, ⓦwww.questenberk.cz. From the outside, this hotel looks like a Baroque chapel, but inside, it's been totally modernized. Rooms are smart, but plain for the price, though the views from some are superb. Doubles from 7500Kč.

Savoy Keplerova 6 ⓣ224 302 430, ⓦwww.hotel-savoy.cz. Super-luxury hotel concealed behind a pretty Art Nouveau facade and famous for its large marble bathrooms. This is one of Prague's finest, and as a result is popular with visiting celebs. Pretty prices too, with doubles from 10,000Kč.

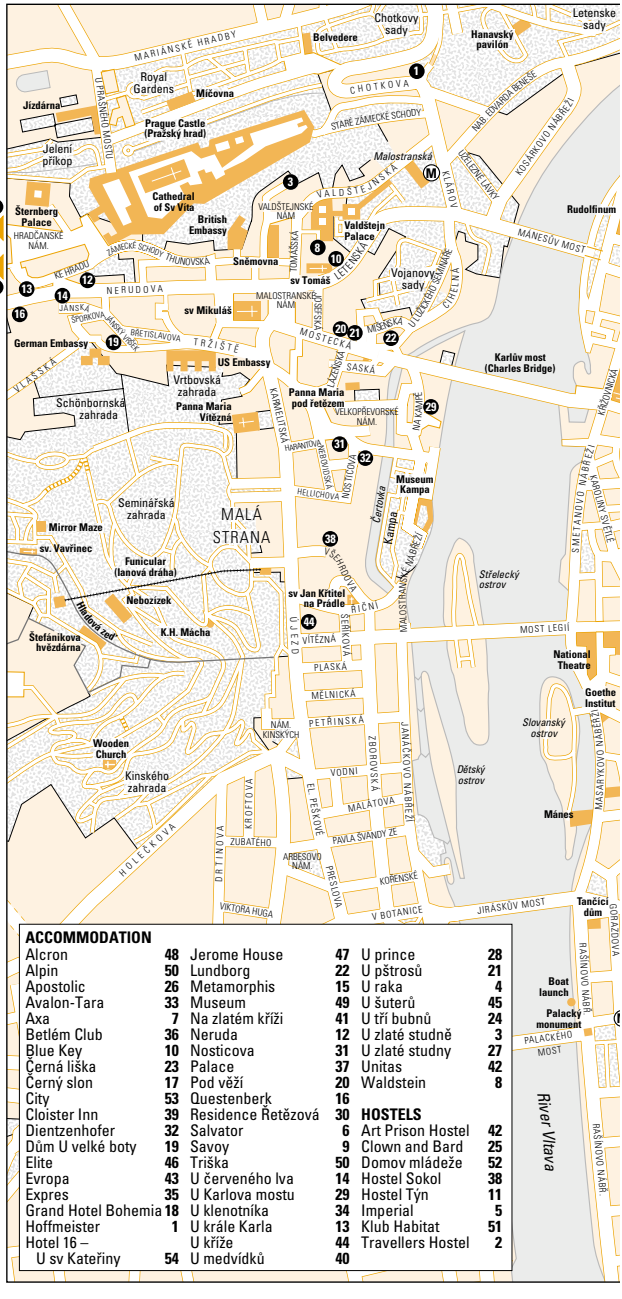
U krále Karla (King Charles) Úvoz 4 ⓣ234 125 229, ⓦwww.romantikhotels.com. Possibly the most tastefully exquisite of all the small luxury hotels in the castle district, with beautiful antique furnishings and stained-glass windows. It's situated just at the top of Nerudova, a fair walk from the nearest tram stop. Doubles from 5000Kč.

U raka (The Crayfish) Černínská 10 ⓣ220 511 100, ⓦwww.romantikhotels.com/prag. The perfect hideaway, six double rooms in a little half-timbered eighteenth-century cottage in Nový Svět. No children under 12 or dogs, and advance reservation a must. Doubles from 7000Kč.

Booking accommodation

Prague is pretty busy for much of the year, and as such doesn't have much of a **low season** – February and November are probably the quietest months. If you're going to visit any time from Easter to September, or over the Christmas and New Year period, you need to book well in advance.

If you arrive in Prague without having booked a room, there are several **accommodation agencies** you can turn to, most of which will book you into either a hotel or pension, and some of which can also help you find a hostel bed or a private room in an apartment. Before agreeing to part with any money, be sure you know exactly where you're staying and check about transport to the centre – some places can be a long way out of town. The largest agency in Prague is **AVE** (ⓣ251 551 011, ⓦwww.avetravel.cz), who have desks at the airport, both international train stations, and several points throughout the city; they will book anything from hostels to hotels and are therefore a good last-minute fall-back. Another option is **Pragotur** (ⓣ221 714 130, ⓦwww.prague-info.cz), whose main office is opposite Florenc bus station, though they also have desks in various PIS tourist offices (see p.146). They too can book anything from hotels to hostels, but they specialize in private rooms.



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Powder Tower
New Town Hall
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Týn Church
Estates Theatre
Museum of Communism
Jubilee Synagogue
Mucha Museum
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sv Martin ve zdi
Můstek
Panna Maria Sněžná
Prague State Opera
Národní třída
Nová scéna
Muzeum
National Museum
Nové Město Town Hall
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sv Štěpán
sv Cyril & Metoděj
Karlovo náměstí
sv Ignác
I. P. Pavlova
Vila Amerika (Dvořák Museum)
U kalicha
sv Jan Nepomucký na skalce
Emauzy
Botanická zahrada
Police Museum
Panna Maria Bolestná
Na Karlově
JOSEFOV
STARÉ MĚSTO
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Karlovo
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Náměstí Republiky
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Malá Strana

Blue Key **Letenská 14 ⓣ257 327 250, ⓦwww.bluekey.cz.** Friendly, swish, blue-themed hotel, and despite the busy road outside, in a good location, just a short stroll from Malostranské náměstí; ask for a room facing into the lovely courtyard. Doubles from 3500Kč.

Dientzenhofer **Nosticova 2 ⓣ257 316 830, ⓦwww.dientzenhofer.cz.** Birthplace of its namesake, and a very popular pension due to the fact that it's one of the few reasonably priced places (anywhere in Prague) to have wheelchair access. Doubles from 3700Kč and suites from 4000kč.

Dům U velké boty (The Big Shoe) **Vlašská 30 ⓣ257 532 088, ⓦwww.dumuvelkeboty.cz.** The sheer anonymity of this pension, in a lovely old building in the quiet backstreets, is one of its main draws. Run by a very friendly couple, who speak good English, it has a series of characterful, tastefully modernized rooms, some with en suite, some without. Breakfast is extra, but worth it. Doubles from 3000Kč.

Hoffmeister **Pod Bruskou 7 ⓣ251 017 111, ⓦwww.hoffmeister.cz.** If you're looking for a large air-conditioned luxury hotel, this place, just a step away from Malostranská metro, has got to be a better bet than many of the more modern monstrosities in the outskirts. Breakfast not included. Doubles from 9000Kč.

Lundborg **Lužického semináře 3 ⓣ257 011 911, ⓦwww.rezidence.lundborg.se.** Very stylish Swedish-run apartment suites, with Baroque painted ceilings and tasteful furnishings, as well as Jacuzzis and Internet access in every room. It is in the thick of it, however, right by the Charles Bridge tower. Suites from 8000Kč.

Neruda **Nerudova 44 ⓣ257 535 557, ⓦwww.hotelneruda-praha.cz.** Stylish hotel a fair walk up Nerudova, with a funky, glass-roofed foyer, lots of natural stone, and smart, minimalist modern decor in the rooms. Doubles from 7000Kč.

Nosticova **Nosticova 1 ⓣ257 312 513, ⓦwww.nosticova.com.** A Baroque house with ten beautifully restored apartments replete with antique furnishings, sumptuous bathrooms and small kitchens, on a peaceful square not far from the Charles Bridge. Apartments from 6750Kč.

Pod věží (Under the Tower) **Mostecká 2 ⓣ257 532 041, ⓦwww.podvezi.com.** This tiny luxury hotel has twelve rooms, kitted out with just about every facility you could want. Proximity to the Charles Bridge means it's a busy little spot, however. Doubles from 6000Kč.

U červeného lva (Red Lion) **Nerudova 41 ⓣ257 533 832, ⓦwww.hotelredlion.cz.** Original seventeenth-century wooden ceilings throughout, complemented by tasteful furnishings, parquet flooring and rugs make this a great choice. Doubles from 5000Kč.

U Karlova mostu **Na Kampě 15 ⓣ257 531 430, ⓦwww.archibald.cz.** Situated on a lovely tree-lined square, just off the Charles Bridge, the rooms in this former brewery have real character, despite the modern fittings. Doubles from 5000Kč.

U kříže (The Cross) **Újezd 20 ⓣ257 313 272.** No airs and graces at this modernized hotel on a busy street in the south of Malá Strana; B&B prices reduced in July and August. Doubles from 3650Kč.

U pštrosů (The Ostrich) **Dražického náměstí 12 ⓣ257 532 410, ⓦwww.upstrosu.cz.** Attractive little Renaissance hotel adjacent to the Charles Bridge; the rooms have wooden floorboards and beams, and some have original ceiling frescoes and views across the river. Doubles from 7300Kč.

U zlaté studně (The Golden well) **U zlaté studně 4 ⓣ257 011 213, ⓦwww.zlatastudna.cz.** The location is pretty special: tucked into the terraces below Prague Castle, next to the Ledeburg Gardens, with incredible views across the rooftops. The rooms aren't half bad either, with lots of original ceilings, and there's a good restaurant attached, with a wonderful summer terrace. Doubles from 6300Kč.

Waldstein **Valdštejnské náměstí 6 ⓣ257 533 939, ⓦwww.avetravel.cz.** A quiet, small, secluded hotel, with just ten rooms, the *Waldstein* has a lovely courtyard and several original Renaissance ceilings, and is tastefully decked out. Doubles from 6000Kč.

Staré Město

Apostolic **Staroměstské náměstí 26 ⓣ221 632 222, ⓦwww.prague-residence.cz.** If you want a room overlooking the astronomical clock on Old Town Square, then book in here, well in advance. Beautiful antique furnishings, big oak ceilings, but only a few rooms, including a single, as well as a suite for four. Doubles from 6000Kč.

Avalon-Tara **Havelská 15 ⓣ224 228 083, ⓦwww.prague-hotel.ws.** Perfect location right over the market on Havelská, with seven very small, plainly furnished but clean rooms, with or without en-suite facilities. Doubles from 2000Kč.

Betlém Club **Betlémské náměstí 9 ⓣ222 221 574, ⓦwww.betlemclub.cz.** Small rooms, but acceptable decor, plus a Gothic cellar for breakfast, and a perfect location on a quiet square at the heart of the old town – a rare bargain. Doubles from 3000Kč.

Černá liška (The Black Fox) **Mikulášská 2 ⓣ224 232 250, ⓦwww.cernaliska.cz.** Well-appointed rooms, all with lovely wooden floors, some with incredible views onto Old Town Square, quieter ones at the back. Doubles from 5000Kč.

Černý slon (Black Elephant) **Týnská 1 ⓣ222 321 521, ⓦwww.hotelcernyslon.cz.** Another ancient building tucked away off Old Town Square by the north portal of the Týn church, now tastefully converted into a very comfortable hotel. Doubles from 5000Kč.

Cloister Inn **Konviktská 14 ⓣ224 211 020, ⓦwww.cloister-inn.com.** Pleasant, well-equipped hotel housed in a nunnery in one of the backstreets; the rooms are basic, but the location is good. There are even cheaper rooms in the *Pension Unitas*, in the same building (see p.138). Doubles from 4000Kč.

Expres **Skořepka 5 ⓣ224 211 801, ⓦwww.athos.cz.** Friendly little hotel with few pretensions: cheap and cheerful fittings, low prices and an excellent location right in the centre of Staré Město. Doubles from 1800Kč.

Grand Hotel Bohemia **Kralodvorská 4 ⓣ234 608 111, ⓦwww.grandhotelbohemia.cz.** Probably the most sumptuously elegant luxury hotel in the old town, just behind the Obecní dům, with some very tasty Art Nouveau decor, and all the amenities you'd expect from an Austrian outfit. Double from 10,000Kč.

Metamorphis **Malá Štupartská 5 ⓣ221 771 011, ⓦwww.metamorphis.cz.** Rooms have attractive parquet floors, tasteful repro furniture and are situated above a café-restaurant in the picturesque Týn courtyard, a step away from Old Town Square. Doubles from 4500Kč.

Residence Řetězová **Řetězová 9 ⓣ222 221 800, ⓦwww.residenceretezova.com.** Characterful apartments of all sizes, each with a kitchenette, wooden or stone floors, Gothic vaulting or wooden beams and repro furnishings throughout. Apartments from 4000Kč.

U klenotníka **Rytířská 3 ⓣ224 211 699, ⓦwww.uklenotnika.cz.** A former jeweller's, with ten small rooms, none of which will win any interior design awards, but which are clean and relatively inexpensive given the location. Doubles from 3300Kč.

U medvídků (The Little Bears) **Na Perštýně 7 ⓣ224 211 916, ⓦwww.umedvidku.cz.** The rooms above this famous Prague pub are plainly furnished, quiet considering the locale, and therefore something of an old town bargain; booking ahead essential. Doubles from 3000Kč.

U prince **Staroměstské náměstí 29 ⓣ224 213 807, ⓦwww.hoteluprince.cz.** Plush hotel, situated right on Old Town Square, with lots of original wooden ceilings, and views across to the astronomical clock. This is not a place for those who want to lose the crowds, as they're standing right outside your door, but if you want to be central, look no further. Doubles from 6000Kč.

U tří bubnů (The Three Drums) **U radnice 10/14 ⓣ224 214 855, ⓦwww.utribubnu.cz.** Small hotel just off Old Town Square with just five tastefully furnished rooms, either with original fifteenth-century wooden ceilings or lots of exposed beams. Doubles from 4000Kč.

U zlaté studny (The Golden Well) **Karlova 3 ⓣ222 220 262, ⓦwww.uzlatestudny.cz.** Situated right in the thick

of it, overlooking the busy tourist thoroughfare of Karlova, this sixteenth-century house has a handful of rooms decked out in pleasing repro-Baroque style, some with original vaulted, panelled and painted ceilings. Doubles from 4500Kč.

Unitas **Bartolomějská 9 ⓣ224 221 802, ⓦwww.unitas.cz.** Set in a Franciscan nunnery, the *Unitas* offers simple twins, plus bargain dorms downstairs in its *Art Prison Hostel* (see p.139). No smoking or drinking, but unbelievably cheap. Twins from 1500Kč.

Nové Město

Alcron **Štěpánská 40 ⓣ222 820 000, ⓦwww.radisson.com/praguecs.** Giant 1930s hotel, just off Wenceslas Square, that has been superbly restored to its former glory by the *Radisson SAS* chain. Rooms are without doubt the most luxurious and tasteful you'll find in Nové Město. Doubles from 6000Kč.

Axa **Na poříčí 40 ⓣ224 816 332, ⓦwww.hotelaxa.com.** Large, plain, modestly refurbished hotel with handy adjacent swimming pool and gym, just ten minutes' walk from náměstí Republiky – make sure you see your room before booking in, however, as standards (view, noise, etc) can vary. Doubles from 3800Kč.

Elite **Ostrovní 32 ⓣ224 932 250, ⓦwww.hotelelite.cz.** An efficient, stylish and very centrally located modern hotel with its own underground car park, but clearly an ancient building at heart, with an enclosed courtyard and the odd Renaissance feature retained. Doubles from 4000Kč.

Evropa **Václavské náměstí 25 ⓣ224 215 387, ⓦwww.evropahotel.cz.** Potentially the most beautiful hotel in Prague, built in the 1900s and sumptuously decorated in Art Nouveau style; the rooms are furnished in repro Louis XIV, and the cheaper ones are without en-suite facilities. Yet despite its prime location and its incredible decor, this place is run like an old Communist hotel – a blast from the past in every sense. Doubles from 2000Kč.

Hotel 16 – U sv Kateřiny **Kateřinská 16 ⓣ224 920 636, ⓦwww.hotel16.cz.** Really friendly family-run hotel offering small, plain but clean en-suite rooms; there's a small terraced garden at the back and botanical gardens nearby. Doubles from 3000Kč.

Jerome House **V jirchářích 13 ⓣ224 933 421, ⓦwww.jerome.cz.** Discreetly tucked away in a nice, quiet area just south of Národní, the *Jerome* offers plain, bright rooms with upbeat, modern design, plus the odd original feature. Very basic, clean rooms. Doubles from 3500Kč.

Museum **Mezibranská 15 ⓣ296 325 186, ⓦwww.pension-museum.cz.** Although situated on one of the busiest roads in Prague, right by the National Museum, the plain, budget-priced rooms in this pension all face onto a quiet courtyard. Doubles from 2650Kč.

Na zlatém kříži (Golden cross) **Jungmannovo náměstí 2 ⓣ224 219 501, ⓦwww.goldencross.cz.** Small hotel in a very tall narrow building (no lift) just a step away from the bottom of Wenceslas Square. Rooms are spacious – especially the suites – and decked out in tasteful repro furnishings, some with nice parquet floors. Doubles from 4000Kč, suites from 4500Kč.

Palace **Panská 12 ⓣ224 093 111, ⓦwww.palacehotel.cz.** While all the other luxury hotels in Prague try their best, the *Palace*, located just off Wenceslas Square, really is a cut above the rest in terms of service. Doubles from 8000Kč.

Salvator **Truhlářská 10 ⓣ222 312 234, ⓦwww.salvator.cz.** Very good location for the price, just a minute's walk from naměstí Republiky, with small but clean rooms (the cheaper ones without en-suite facilities), and a sports bar on the ground floor; advance booking advisable. Doubles from 2850Kč.

U šuterů **Palackého 4 ⓣ606 821 628, ⓦwww.usuteru.cz.** Turn-of-the-century furnishings, parquet flooring, vaulted ceilings and a decent location between Národní and Wenceslas Square make this small pension pretty good value. Doubles from 2500Kč.

Vinohrady & Žižkov

Alpin **Velehradská 25 ⓣ222 723 551, ⓦwww.alpin.cz.** Clean, bare, bargain rooms on the edge of Vinohrady and Žižkov. Doubles from 1500Kč.

City **Belgická 10 ⓣ222 521 606, ⓦwww.hotelcity.cz.** Quiet Vinohrady locale with cheap, clean rooms, some en-suite doubles and family suites, some with shared facilities. Doubles from 1500Kč.

Triška **Vinohradská 105 ⓣ222 727 313, ⓦwww.hotel-triska.cz.** Large turn-of-the-century hotel with comfortable rooms and parquet floors; they've made an effort with the interior decor, the service is good and it's close to the metro. Doubles from 2300Kč.

Hostels

Art Prison Hostel **Bartolomějská 9 ⓣ224 221 802, ⓦwww.unitas.cz.** On the basement floor of the excellent-value *Unitas pension* (see p.138), the *Art Prison Hostel* offers bargain dorms in converted secret-police prison cells (Havel stayed in P6). No smoking or drinking. Dorm beds from 400Kč.

Clown and Bard **Bořivojova 102, Žižkov ⓣ222 716 453, ⓦwww.clownandbard.com.** Žižkov hostel that's so laid-back it's horizontal, and not a place to go if you don't like hippies. Nevertheless, it's clean, undeniably cheap, stages events and has laundry facilities. Doubles from 900Kč, dorm beds from 250Kč.

Domov mládeže **Dykova 20, Vinohrady ⓣ415 658 580, ⓦwww.hostel.cz/en/h-dm.asp.** Nice clean hostel in the villa quarter of Vinohrady. Doubles from 880Kč, dorm beds from 350Kč.

Hostel Sokol **Újezd 40, Malá Strana ⓣ257 007 397.** Shambolic student hostel with basic dorm beds, plus a communal kitchen, in a great location in Malá Strana; the entrance is on Všehrdova. Doubles from 700Kč, dorm beds 350Kč.

Hostel Týn **Týnská 19, Staré Město ⓣ224 808 333, ⓦwww.hosteltyn.web2001.cz.** The most centrally located hostel, just metres from Old Town Square. Doubles from 1200Kč, six-bed dorms 400Kč.

Imperial **Na poříčí 15, Nové Město ⓣ222 316 012, ⓦwww.hotelimperial.cz.** The café on the ground floor is a 1914 period piece; the vast hostel/hotel above it is much more basic – clean, simply furnished doubles, triples and quads with shared facilities only from 1500Kč.

Klub Habitat **Na Zderaze 10, Nové Město ⓣ224 921 706, ⓦwww.hotelline.cz.** The best of Prague's hostels, offering a discount to HI members. Book ahead. Doubles from 1000Kč, dorm beds from 400Kč.

Travellers Hostel **Dlouhá 33, Staré Město ⓣ224 826 662, ⓦwww.travellers.cz.** Very centrally located hostel and booking office above the *Roxy* nightclub – if there's not enough room here, they'll find you a dorm bed somewhere for around 400Kč. Doubles from 1250Kč.

Essentials

Arrival

Prague is one of Europe's smaller capital cities, with a population of around one and a quarter million. The airport lies just over 10km northwest of the city centre, with only a bus link or taxi to get you into town. By contrast, both the international train stations and the main bus terminal are linked to the centre by the fast and efficient metro system.

By plane

Prague's **Ruzyně airport** (☎220 111 111, ⓦwww.csl.cz) is connected to the city by minibus, bus and taxi. The Čedaz shared **minibus service**, from right outside the airport, will take you (and several others) to your hotels for around 360Kč per drop-off. The minibus also runs a scheduled service (daily 5.30am–9.30pm; every 30min), which stops first at Dejvická metro station, at the end of metro line A (journey time 20min) and ends at náměstí Republiky (journey time 30min); the full journey currently costs 90Kč.

The cheapest way to get into town is on **local bus #119** (daily 5am to midnight; every 15–20min; journey time 20min), which stops frequently and also ends its journey outside Dejvická metro station. You can buy your ticket from the public transport (DP) information desk in arrivals (daily 7am–10pm), or from the nearby machines or newsagents. If you arrive after midnight, you can catch the hourly night bus #510 from outside the airport, to Divoká Šárka, the terminus for night tram #51, which will take you on to Národní in the centre of town.

Of course, it's easy enough to take a taxi from the airport into the centre, though Prague **taxi** drivers have a reputation for overcharging. "Airport Cars" (☎220 113 892), who have a monopoly on taxis from the airport, charge around 500–600Kč to the city centre.

By train and bus

International trains arrive either at Praha hlavní nádraží, on the edge of Nové Město and Vinohrady, or at Praha-Holešovice, which lies in an industrial suburb north of the city centre. At both stations you'll find exchange outlets, 24-hour left-luggage offices (*úschovna zavazadel*) and accommodation agencies (plus a tourist office at Hlavní nádraží). Both stations are on metro lines (see flap map), and Hlavní nádraží is only a five-minute walk from Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square).

Prague's main **bus terminal** is Praha-Florenc (metro Florenc), on the eastern edge of Nové Město, where virtually all long-distance international and domestic services terminate. It's a confusing place to end up, but it has a left-luggage office upstairs (daily 5am–11pm) and you can make a quick exit to the adjacent metro station.

City transport

The centre of Prague, where most of the city's sights are concentrated, is reasonably small and best explored on foot. At some point, however, in order to cross the city quickly or reach some of the more widely dispersed attractions, you'll need to use the city's cheap and efficient **public transport system** (*dopravní podnik* or DP; ⓦwww.dp-praha.cz), which comprises the metro and a network of trams and buses. You can get free maps, tickets and passes from the DP information offices at the airport (daily 7am–7pm), from Holešovice train

station (Mon–Fri 7am–6pm), Můstek and Muzeum metro stations (daily 7am–9pm), and the Černý Most and Anděl metro stations (Mon–Fri 7am–6pm).

Tickets and passes

Prague's transport system used to have a simple ticketing system – not any more. Most Praguers simply buy monthly passes, and to avoid having to understand the complexities of the single ticket system, you too are best off buying a travel pass.

You can buy a **travel pass** (*časová jízdenka*) for 24 hours (*na 24 hodin*; 100Kč), three days (*na 3 dny*; 200Kč), seven days (*na 7 dní*; 250Kč) or fifteen days (*na 15 dní*; 280Kč); no photos or ID are needed, though you must write your name and date of birth on the reverse of the ticket, and punch it to validate when you first use it. All the passes are available from DP outlets, and the 24-hour pass is also available from ticket machines.

Probably the single most daunting aspect of buying a ticket is having to use these **ticket machines**, found inside all metro stations and at some bus and tram stops. Despite the multitude of buttons on the machines, for a single **ticket** (*lístek* or *jízdenka*) in the two central zones (2 *pásma*), there are just two basic choices. The 8Kč version (*zlevněná*) allows you to travel for up to fifteen minutes on the trams or buses, or up to four stops on the metro; it's known as a *nepřestupní jízdenka*, or "no change ticket", although you can in fact change metro lines (but not buses or trams). The 12Kč version (*plnocenná*) is valid for one hour at **peak times** (Mon–Fri 5am–8pm) – or an hour and a half off-peak – during which you may change trams, buses or metro lines as many times as you like, hence its name, *přestupní jízdenka*, or "changing ticket". Half-price tickets are available for children aged 6–14; under-6s travel free.

If you're buying a ticket from one of the machines, you must press the appropriate button – press it once for one ticket, twice for two and so on – followed by the *výdej*/enter button, after which you put your money in. The machines do give change, but if you don't have enough coins, you may find the person on duty in the metro office by the barriers can give you change or sell you a ticket. Tickets can also be bought, en masse, and rather more easily, from a tobacconist (*tabák*), street kiosk, newsagent, PIS office or any place that displays the yellow DP sticker. When you enter the metro, or board a tram or bus, you must validate your ticket by placing it in one of the electronic machines to hand.

There's nothing to stop people from freeloading on the system of course, since there are no barriers. However, plain-clothes **inspectors** (*revizoři*) make random checks and will issue an on-the-spot fine of 400Kč (800Kč if you don't cough up immediately) to anyone caught without a valid ticket or pass; controllers should show you their ID (a small metal disc), and give you a receipt (*paragon*).

Metro

Prague's futuristic, Soviet-built **metro** is fast, smooth and ultra-clean, running daily from 5am to midnight with trains every two minutes during peak hours, slowing down to every four to ten minutes by late evening. Its three lines (with a fourth planned) intersect at various points in the city centre and the route plans are easy to follow (see colour map at the back of the book).

The stations are fairly discreetly marked above ground with the metro logo, in green (line A), yellow (line B) or red (line C). The constant bleeping at metro entrances is to enable blind people to locate the escalators, which are a free-for-all, with no fast lane. Once inside the metro, it's worth knowing that *výstup* means exit and *přestup* will lead you to one of the connecting lines at an interchange. The digital clock at the end of the platform tells you what time it is and how long it was since the last train.

Trams

The electric **tram** (*tramvaj*) **system**, in operation since 1891, negotiates Prague's hills and cobbles with remarkable dexterity. Modern rolling stock is gradually being introduced, but most of Prague's trams (traditionally red, but often now plastered over with advertising) date back to the Communist era. After the metro, trams are the fastest and most efficient way of getting around, running every six to eight minutes at peak times, and every five to fifteen minutes at other times – check the timetables posted at every stop (*zastávka*), which list the departure times from that specific stop. Note that it is the custom for younger folk (and men of all ages) to vacate their seat when an older woman enters the carriage.

Tram #22, which runs from Vinohrady to Hradčany via the centre of town and Malá Strana, is a good way to get to grips with the lie of the land, and a cheap way of sightseeing, though you should beware of pickpockets. From Easter to October, interwar **tram #91** runs from Výstaviště to náměstí Republiky via Malá Strana (Sat & Sun hourly 1–7pm) and back again; the ride takes forty minutes and costs 15Kč. **Night trams** (*noční tramvaje*; #51–58) run roughly every thirty to forty minutes from around midnight to 4.30am; the routes are different from the daytime ones, though at some point all night trams pass along Lazarská in Nové Město. For more tram routes, see the colour map at the back of the book.

Buses

You'll rarely need to get on a **bus** (*autobus*) within Prague itself, since most of them keep well out of the centre of town. If you're intent upon visiting the zoo or staying in some of the city's more obscure suburbs though, you may need to use them: their hours of operation are similar to those of the trams (though generally less frequent. **Night buses** (*noční autobusy*) run just once an hour between midnight and 5am.

Boats

In the summer months there's a regular **boat service** on the River Vltava run by the PPS (*Pražská paroplavební společnost*; ⓣ 224 930 017, ⓦ www.paroplavba.cz) from just south of Jiráskův most on Rašínovo nábřeží (see map on p.107). In the summer three or four boats a day run to Troja (see p.108) in the northern suburbs (June–Aug daily; April, Sept & Oct Sat & Sun only; 150Kč return).

In addition, the PPS also offers **boat trips** around Prague (mid-March to Oct daily; 150–250Kč) on board a 1930s paddlesteamer. Another option is to hop aboard the much smaller boats run by Prague-Venice (ⓣ603 819 947, ⓦ www.prague-venice.cz), which depart for a half-hour meander over to the Čertovka by Kampa island (270Kč). The boats depart from the north side of the Charles Bridge on the Staré Město bank.

Taxis

Taxis come in all shapes and sizes, and, theoretically at least, are extremely cheap. However, if they think they can get away with it, many Prague taxi drivers will attempt to overcharge; the worst offenders, needless to say, hang out at the taxi ranks closest to the tourist sights. Officially, the initial fare on the meter should be around 30Kč plus 22kč per kilometre within Prague. The best advice is to hail a cab or have your hotel or pension call you one, rather than pick one up at the taxi ranks. Two cab companies with fairly good reputations are: Profitaxi (ⓣ261 314 151 or AAA ⓣ233 113 311).

Websites

Maps ⓦ www.mapy.cz. This site will provide you with a thumbnail map to help you find any hotel, restaurant, pub, shop or street in Prague (and elsewhere in the Czech Republic).
Radio Prague ⓦ www.radio.cz/english. An informative site well worth visiting, with updated news and weather as audio or text.
Tickets ⓦ www.ticketpro.cz, ⓦ www.ticketstream.cz or ⓦ www.ticketsbti.cz. Three good sites for finding out what's on in Prague and booking tickets online.
Welcome to the Czech Republic ⓦ www.czech.cz. Basic information on the country in English, and on the worldwide network of Czech Centres, run by the Czech Foreign Ministry.

Information

Once in Prague, the main tourist office is the **Prague Information Service** or PIS (Pražská informační služba), whose main branch is at Na příkopě 20, Nové Město (April–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat & Sun 9am–5pm; Nov–March Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 9am–3pm; ⓦ www.prague-info.cz); see map on p.99. There are additional PIS offices in the main train station, Praha hlavní nádraží, and within the Staré Město Town Hall on Staroměstské náměstí (same hours), plus a summer-only office in the Malá Strana bridge tower on the Charles Bridge. PIS staff speak English, but their helpfulness varies enormously; they can usually answer most enquiries, and can organize accommodation, sell maps, guides and theatre tickets.

PIS also distributes and sells some useful **listings publications**, including *Culture in Prague/Česká kultura* (ⓦ www.ceskakultura.cz), a monthly English-language booklet listing the major events, concerts and exhibitions. Another good source of information is the weekly **English-language paper**, *Prague Post* (ⓦ www.praguepost.cz), which carries selective listings on the latest exhibitions, shows, gigs and events around the capital.

The PIS also sells the much-vaunted **Prague Card**, which gives three days' free entry into over forty sights within the city for 490Kč. Given the average entry charge for a museum is only 50Kč, and the card doesn't include the sights of the Jewish Museum, you're not necessarily going to save much money. For another 200Kč, your Prague Card can serve as a three-day public transport pass, though again, it's worth it only if you're going to use the trams and metro a lot. All in all, the card may save you hassle, but probably not much money.

Festivals and events

Easter (Velikonoce)

The age-old sexist ritual of whipping girls' calves with braided birch twigs tied together with ribbons (*pomlázky*) is still practised. To prevent such a fate, the girls are supposed to offer the boys a coloured Easter egg and pour a bucket of cold water over them.

"Burning of the Witches" (pálení čarodějnic)

Halloween comes early to the Czech Republic when bonfires are lit across the country, and old brooms thrown out and burned on **April 30**, as everyone celebrates the end of the long winter.

International Book Fair

The fair usually takes place in **early May** at the Výstaviště fairgrounds (see p.126), and attracts an impressive array of international literary talent; the language of the discussions and readings is often English; ⓦ www.bookworld.cz.

Prague Spring Festival (*Pražské jaro*)

By far the biggest annual arts event and the country's most prestigious international music festival. Established in 1946, it traditionally **begins on May 12**, the anniversary of Smetana's death, with a procession from his grave in Vyšehrad to the Obecní dům where the composer's *Má vlast* (*My Country*) is performed in the presence of the president, **finishing on June 2** with a rendition of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Tickets for the festival sell out fast – try your luck by writing, a month before the festival begins, to the Prague Spring Festival box office at Hellichova 18, Malá Strana; ⓣ257 312 547, ⓦ www.festival.cz.

Prague International Marathon

Runners from over fifty countries come to run through the cobbled streets and over the Charles Bridge in **late May**; ⓦ www.pim.cz.

World Festival of Puppet Art

Week-long international puppet festival in **late May/early June** organized by the puppeteers' world body, UNIMA, which has its HQ in Prague; ⓦ www. puppetart.com.

Respect Festival

World music weekend held at various venues across the city in **June**, including Akropolis, Roxy and the Štvanice island.

Dance Prague (Tanec Praha)

An international festival of modern dance which takes place over three weeks in **June** throughout the city and is now an established highlight in the cultural calendar; ⓦ www.tanecpha.cz.

Prague Autumn Festival (*Pražský podzim*)

Not quite as prestigious as the spring festival, but still plenty of top-drawer performances of classical music held at the Rudolfinum in **September**; ⓦ www.pragueautumn.cz.

Burčák

At the **end of September** for a couple of weeks, temporary stalls on street corners sell the year's partially fermented new wine, known as *burčák*, a misty, heady brew.

Christmas markets

Christmas markets selling gifts, food and mulled wine (*svárák*) are set up at several places around the city in **December**: the biggest ones are on Wenceslas Square and the Old Town Square. Temporary ice rinks are also constructed at various locations.

Saint Barbara

On the saint's feast day of **December 4**, cherry-tree branches are bought as decorations, the aim being to get them to blossom before Christmas.

Eve of St Nicholas

On the evening of **December 5**, numerous trios, dressed up as St Nicholas (*svatý Mikuláš*), an angel and a devil, tour round the streets, the angel handing out sweets and fruit to children who've been good, while the devil dishes out coal and potatoes to those who've been naughty. The Czech St Nicholas has white hair and a beard, and dresses not in red but in a white priest's outfit, with a bishop's mitre.

Bohuslav Martinů Festival

Annual festival of music in **early December** celebrating the least well-known of the big four Czech composers ⓦ www.martinu.cz.

Christmas Eve (*štědrý večer*)

December 24 is traditionally a day of fasting, broken only when the evening star appears, signalling the beginning of the Christmas feast of carp, potato salad, schnitzel and sweetbreads. Only after the meal are the children allowed to open their presents, which miraculously appear beneath the tree, thanks not to Santa Claus, but to Baby Jesus (*Ježíšek*).

Directory

Addresses The street name is always written before the building number in Prague addresses. Prague is also divided into numbered postal districts: of the areas covered in the Guide, central Prague is Prague 1; southern Nové Město and half of Vinohrady is Prague 2; the rest of Vinohrady and Žižkov is Prague 3; Holešovice is Prague 7.

Airlines **Austrian Airlines** ☎220 114 324, 🌐www.aua.com; **British Airways** ☎222 114 444, 🌐www.britishairways.com; **bmibaby** ☎224 810 180, 🌐www.bmibaby.com; **Czech Airlines (ČSA)** ☎220 104 310, 🌐www.csa.cz; **Delta** ☎224 946 733, 🌐www.delta.com; **easyJet** ☎296 333 333, 🌐www. easyjet.com; **KLM** ☎233 090 933, 🌐www.klm.com.

Banks Banking hours are Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, often with a break at lunchtime. ATMs can be found across the city.

Bike rental City Bike, Královdorská 5 ☎776 180 274.

Car **Avis** Klimentská 46 ☎221 851 229, 🌐www.avis.cz; **Czechocar** Kongresové centrum 5 května 65 ☎220 113 454, 🌐www.czechocar.cz; **Hertz** Karlovo nám 28 ☎220 102 424, 🌐www.hertz.cz.

Cultural institutes **Austrian Cultural Institute** Jungmannovo náměstí 18, 🌐www.austria.cz/kultur; **British Council** Bredovský dvůr, Politických vězňů 13 🌐www.britishcouncil.cz; **Goethe Institut Masarykovo nábřeží 32** 🌐www. goethe.de/prag; **Institut Français** Štěpánská 35, 🌐www.ifp.cz; **Instituto Italiano di Cultura** Šporkova 14 🌐www.iic-praga.cz.

Dentist Václavské náměstí 33 ☎224 228 984.

Disabled travellers The guidebook Accessible Prague/Přístupná Praha is available from the Prague Wheelchair Association (Pražská organizace vozíčkářů), Benediktská 6 ☎224 827 210, 🌐www.pov.cz.

Electricity This is the standard continental 220 volts AC. Most European appliances should work as long as you have an adaptor for continental-style two-pin round plugs. North Americans will need this plus a transformer.

Embassies **Australia** Klimentská 10 ☎420 296 578, 🌐www.embassy.gov.au/cz; **Britain** Thunovská 14 ☎257 402 226, 🌐www.britain.cz; **Canada** Muchova 6 ☎272 101 890, 🌐www.Canada.cz; **Ireland** Tržiště 13 ☎257 530 061; **New Zealand** Dykova 19 ☎222 514 672; **USA** Tržiště 15 ☎257 530 663, 🌐www.usembassy.cz.

Emergencies Ambulance ☎155; Police ☎158; Fire ☎150.

Exchange 24hr service, near the bottom of Wenceslas Square at 28 října 13 (see map p.99).

Gay & lesbian The main campaigning gay and lesbian organisation is GI, Senovážné náměstí 2 ☎224 223 811, 🌐www.gay.iniciativa.cz.

Hospital For an English-speaking doctor, you should go to the private Nemocnice na Homolce, Roentgenova 2 ☎257 271 111. If it's an emergency, dial ☎155 for an ambulance and you'll be taken to the nearest hospital.

Internet These cafés have Internet access: Obecní dům (see p.104), Bohemia Bagel (see p.73), and Globe (see p.112). For details of how to plug your lap-top in when abroad, check out 🌐www.kropla.com.

Left luggage Prague's main bus and train stations have lockers and/or a 24hr left-luggage office, with instructions in English.

Lost property The main train stations have lost property offices – look for the sign *ztráty a nálezy* – and there's a central municipal one at Karoliny Světlé 5. If you've lost your passport, then get in touch with your embassy (see above).

Money The Czech crown or *koruna česká* (abbreviated to Kč or CZK) is divided into one hundred relatively worthless *hellers* or *halíře* (abbreviated to h). At the time of going to press there were around 50Kč to the pound sterling, 30Kč to the euro and around 25Kč to the US dollar. For the most up-to-date exchange rates, consult the useful currency converter websites 🌐www

.oanda.com or ⓦwww.xe.com.
Notes come in 20Kč, 50Kč, 100Kč, 200Kč, 500Kč, 1000Kč and 2000Kč (and less frequently 5000Kč) denominations; coins as 1Kč, 2Kč, 5Kč, 10Kč, 20Kč and 50Kč, plus 10h, 20h and 50h.

Newspapers You can get most foreign dailies and magazines at the kiosks at the bottom of Wenceslas Square, outside metro Můstek.

Pharmacies 24hr chemist at Palackého 5 ⓣ224 946 982.

Phones Most public phones take only phone cards (*telefonní karty*), available from post offices, tobacconists and some shops (prices vary). There are instructions in English, and if you press the appropriate button the language on the digital read-out will change to English. If you have any problems, ring ⓣ1181 to get through to international information.

Phone numbers All Prague phone numbers should be nine digit. There is no separate city code.

Police There are two main types of police: the *Policie* are the national force with white shirts, navy blue jackets and grey trousers; and the Městská *policie*, run by the Prague city authorities, distinguishable by their all-black uniforms. The main central police station is at Bartolomějská 6.

Post The main post office (*pošta*) is at Jindřišská 14 ⓣ221 131 111; daily 7am to 8pm; take a ticket and wait for your number to come up.

Public holidays **January 1** New Year's Day; **Easter Monday**; **May 1** May Day; **May 8** VE Day; **July 5** Introduction of Christianity; **July 6** Death of Jan Hus; **September 28** Czech State Day; **October 28** Foundation of the Republic; **November 17** Battle for Freedom and Democracy Day; **December 24** Christmas Eve; **December 25** Christmas Day; **December 26** St Stephen's Day.

Time The Czech Republic is on Central European Time (CET), one hour ahead of Britain and six hours ahead of EST, with the clocks going forward in spring and back again some time in autumn – the exact date changes from year to year. Generally speaking, Czechs use the 24-hour clock.

Toilets Apart from the automatic ones in central Prague, public toilets (*záchody, toalety* or WC) are few and far between. In some, you have to buy toilet paper (by the sheet) from the attendant, whom you will also have to pay as you enter. Standards of hygiene can be low. Gentlemen should head for *muži* or *páni*; ladies should head for *ženy* or *dámy*.

Tours For a two-hour walking tour of Prague, meet up at the Wenceslas Monument at the top of Wenceslas Square at 9.45am or 1.30pm; tickets 300Kč; City Tours ⓣ0608 200 912, ⓦwww.praguer.com.

Language

Czech

A modicum of English is spoken in Prague's central restaurants and hotels, and among the city's younger generation. Any attempt to speak Czech will be heartily appreciated, though don't be discouraged if people seem not to understand, as most will be unaccustomed to hearing foreigners stumble through their language. Unfortunately, Czech (český) is a highly complex western Slav tongue, into which you're unlikely to make much headway during a short stay.

Pronunciation

English-speakers often find Czech impossibly difficult to pronounce: just try the Czech tongue-twister, strč prst skrz krk (stick your finger down your neck). The good news is that, apart from a few special letters, each letter and syllable is pronounced as it's written – the trick is always to **stress the first syllable** of a word, no matter what its length; otherwise you'll render it unintelligible.

Short and long vowels

Czech has both short and long vowels (the latter being denoted by a variety of accents):

a like the u in cup
á as in father
e as in pet
é as in fair
ě like the ye in yes
i or y as in pit
í or ý as in seat
o as in not
ó as in door
u like the oo in book
ů or ú like the oo in fool

Vowel combinations and diphthongs

There are very few diphthongs in Czech, so any combinations of vowels other than those below should be pronounced as two separate syllables.

au like the ou in foul
ou like the oe in foe

Consonants and accents

There are no silent consonants, but it's worth remembering that r and l can form a syllable if

The alphabet

In the Czech alphabet, letters which feature a *háček* (as in the *č* of the word itself) are considered separate letters and appear in Czech indexes immediately after their more familiar cousins. More confusingly, the consonant combination *ch* is also considered as a separate letter and appears in Czech indexes after the letter *h*.

standing between two other consonants or at the end of a word, as in Brno (Br-no) or Vltava (Vl-ta-va). The consonants listed below are those which differ substantially from the English. Accents look daunting, particularly the háček, which appears above c, d, l, n, r, s, t and z, but the only one which causes a lot of problems is ř, probably the most difficult letter to say in the entire language – even Czech toddlers have to be taught how to say it.

c like the **ts** in boats
č like the **ch** in chicken
ch like the **ch** in the Scottish loch
d' like the **d** in duped
g always as in goat, never as in general
h always as in have, but more energetic
j like the **y** in yoke
kd pronounced as **gd**
l' like the **lli** in colliery
mě pronounced as mnye
ň like the **n** in nuance
p softer than the English **p**
r as in rip, but often rolled
ř like the sound of **r** and **ž** combined
š like the **sh** in shop
ť like the **t** in tutor
ž like the **s** in pleasure; at the end of a word like the **sh** in shop

Words and phrases

Basics

Yes	ano
No	ne
Please/excuse me	prosím vás
Don't mention it	není zač
Sorry	pardon
Thank you	děkuju
Bon appétit	dobrou chuť
Bon voyage	šťstnou cestu
Hello/goodbye (informal)	ahoj
Hello (formal)	dobrý den
Goodbye (formal)	na shledanou
Good morning	dobré ráno
Good evening	dobrý večer
Good night (when leaving)	dobrou noc
How are you?	jak se máte?
I'm	ja jsem
English	angličan(ka)/
Irish/Scottish	ir(ka)/skot(ka)/
Welsh	velšan(ka)/
American	američan(ka)
Do you speak English?	mluvíte anglicky?
I don't speak German	nemluvím německy
I don't understand	nerozumím
I understand	rozumím
I don't know	nevím
Speak slowly	mluvíte pomalu
How do you say that in Czech?	jak se tohle řekne česky?
Could you write it down for me?	mužete mí to napsat?
Today	dnes
Yesterday	včera
Tomorrow	zítra
The day after tomorrow	pozítří
Now	hnet
Later	později
Wait a minute!	moment
Leave me alone!	dej mi pokoj!
Go away!	jdi pryč!
Help!	pomoc!
This one	tento
A little	trochu
Another one	ještě jedno
Large/small	velký/malý
More/less	více/méně
Good/bad	dobrý/špatný
Cheap/expensive	levný/drahý
Hot/cold	horký/studený
With/without	s/bez
The bill please	zaplatím prosím
Do you have …?	máte …?
We don't have	nemáme
We do have	máme

Questions

What?	co?
Where?	kde?
When?	kdy?
Why?	proč?
Which one?	který/ktera?
This one?	ten/ta?
How many?	kolík?
What time does it open?	kdy máte otevřeno?
What time does it close?	kdy zavíráte?

Getting around

Over here	tady
Over there	tam
Left	nalevo
Right	napravo
Straight on	rovně
Where is …?	kde je …?
How do I get to Prague?	jak se dostanu do Prahy ?
How do I get to the...?	jak se dostanu k ...?
By bus	autobusem
By train	vlakem
By car	autem
On foot	pěšky
By taxi	taxíkem
Stop here, please	zastavte tady, prosím
Ticket	jízdenka/lístek
Return ticket	zpateční
Railway station	nádraží
Bus station	autobusové nádraží
Bus stop	autobusová zastávka
When's the next train to Prague?	kdy jede další vlak do Prahy?
Is it going to Prague?	jede to do Prahy?
Do I have to change?	musím přestupovat?
Do I need a reservation?	musím mit místenku?
Is this seat free?	je tu volna?
May we (sit down)?	můžeme (se sednout)?

Accommodation

Are there any rooms available?	máte volné pokoje?
Do you have a double room?	máte jednou dvou lůžkovy pokoj?
For one night	na jednu noc
With shower	se sprchou
With bath	s koupelnou
How much is it?	kolík to stojí?
With breakfast?	se snídaně?

Some signs

Entrance	vchod
Exit	východ
Toilets	záchody/toalety
Men	muži
Women	ženy
Ladies	dámy
Gentlemen	pánové
Open	otevřeno
Closed	zavřeno
Pull/Push	sem/tam
Danger!	pozor!
Hospital	nemocnice
No smoking	kouření zakázáno
No entry	vstup zakázán
Arrival	příjezd
Departure	odjezd

Days of the week

Monday	pondělí
Tuesday	uterý
Wednesday	středa
Thursday	čtvrtek
Friday	pátek
Saturday	sobota
Sunday	neděle
Day	den
Week	týden
Month	měsíc
Year	rok

Months of the year

Many Slav languages have their own highly individual systems in which the words for the names of the months are descriptive nouns, sometimes beautifully apt for the month in question.

January	leden (ice)
February	únor (hibernation)
March	březen (birch)
April	duben (oak)

May	květen (blossom)
June	červen (red)
July	červenec (redder)
August	srpen (sickle)
September	září (blazing)
October	říjen (rutting)
November	listopad (leaves falling)
December	prosinec (slaughter of pigs)

Numbers

1	jeden
2	dva
3	tří
4	čtyři
5	pět
6	šest
7	sedm
8	osm
9	devět
10	deset
11	jedenáct
12	dvanáct
13	třináct
14	čtrnáct
15	patnáct
16	šestnáct
17	sedmnáct
18	osmnáct
19	devatenáct
20	dvacet
21	dvacetjedna
30	třicet
40	čtyřicet
50	padesát
60	šedesát
70	sedmdesát
80	osmdesát
90	devadesát
100	sto
101	sto jedna
155	sto padesát pět
200	dvě stě
300	tři sta
400	čtyři sta
500	pět set
600	šest set
700	sedm set
800	osm set
900	devět set
1000	tisíc

Food and drink terms

Basics

chléb	bread
chlebíček	(open) sandwich
cukr	sugar
hořčice	mustard
houska	round roll
knedlíky	dumplings
křen	horseradish
lžíce	spoon
maso	meat
máslo	butter
med	honey
mléko	milk
moučník	dessert
nápoje	drinks
na zdraví	cheers!
nůž	knife
oběd	lunch
obloha	garnish
ocet	vinegar
ovoce	fruit
pečivo	pastry
pepř	pepper
polévka	soup
předkrmy	starters
přílohy	side dishes
rohlík	finger roll
rybby	fish
rýže	rice
sklenice	glass
snídaně	breakfast
sůl	salt
šálek	cup
talíř	plate
tartarská omáčka	tartare sauce
večeře	supper/dinner
vejce	eggs
vidlička	fork
volské oko	fried egg
zeleniny	vegetables

Common terms

čerstvý	fresh
domácí	home-made
dušený	stew/casserole
grilovaný	roast on the spit
kyselý	sour
na kmíně	with caraway seeds
na roštu	grilled
nadívaný	stuffed
nakládaný	pickled
(za)pečený	baked/roast
plněný	stuffed
s.m. (s máslem)	with butter
sladký	sweet
slaný	salted
smažený	fried in breadcrumbs
studený	cold
syrový	raw
sýrový	cheesy
teplý	hot
uzený	smoked
vařený	boiled
znojmský	with gherkins

Soups

boršč	beetroot soup
bramborová	potato soup
čočková	lentil soup
fazolová	bean soup
hovězí vývar	beef broth
hrachová	pea soup
kapustnica	sauerkraut, mushroom and meat soup
kuřecí	thin chicken soup
rajská	tomato soup
zeleninová	vegetable soup

Fish

kapr	carp
losos	salmon
makrela	mackerel
platys	flounder
pstruh	trout
rybí filé	fillet of fish
sardinka	sardine
štika	pike
treska	cod
zavináč	herring/rollmop

Meat dishes

bažant	pheasant
biftek	beef steak
čevapčiči	spicy meat balls
dršťky	tripe
drůbež	poultry
guláš	goulash
hovězí	beef
husa	goose
játra	liver
jazyk	tongue
kachna	duck
klobásy	sausages
kotleta	cutlet
kuře	chicken
kýta	leg
ledvinky	kidneys
řízek	steak
roštěná	sirloin
salám	salami
sekaná	meat loaf
skopové maso	mutton
slanina	bacon
svíčková	fillet of beef
šunka	ham
telecí	veal
vepřový	pork
vepřové řízek	breaded pork cutlet or schnitzel
zajíc	hare
žebírko	ribs

Vegetables

brambory	potatoes
brokolice	broccoli
celer	celery
cibule	onion
česnek	garlic
chřest	asparagus
čočka	lentils
fazole	beans
houby	mushrooms
hranolky	chips, French fries
hrášek	peas
karot	carrot
květák	cauliflower
kyselá okurka	pickled gherkin
kyselé zelí	sauerkraut
lečo	ratatouille
lilek	aubergine
okurka	cucumber

pórek	leek
rajče	tomato
ředkev	radish
řepná bulva	beetroot
špenát	spinach
zelí	cabbage
žampiony	mushrooms

Fruit, cheese and nuts

banán	banana
borůvky	blueberries
broskev	peach
brusinky	cranberries
bryndza	goat's cheese in brine
citrón	lemon
grejp	grapefruit
hermelín	Czech brie
hrozny	grapes
hruška	pear
jablko	apple
jahody	strawberries
kompot	stewed fruit
maliny	raspberries
mandle	almonds
meruňka	apricot
niva	semi-soft, crumbly, blue cheese
oříšky	peanuts
ostružiny	blackberries
oštěpek	heavily smoked, curd cheese
parenica	rolled strips of lightly smoked, curd cheese
pivní sýr	cheese flavoured with beer
pomeranč	orange
rozinky	raisins
švestky	plums
třešně	cherries
tvaroh	fresh curd cheese
urda	soft, fresh, whey cheese
uzený sýr	smoked cheese
vlašské ořechy	walnuts

Drinks

čaj	tea
destiláty	spirits
káva	coffee
koňak	brandy
láhev	bottle
minerální (voda)	mineral (water)
mléko	milk
pivo	beer
presso	espresso
s ledem	with ice
soda	soda
suché víno	dry wine
šumivý	fizzy
svařené víno /svařak	mulled wine
tonic	tonic
vinný střik	white wine with soda
víno	wine

small print & Index

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1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Help us update

We've gone to a lot of effort to ensure that the first edition of **Prague DIRECTIONS** is accurate and up-to-date. However, things change – places get "discovered", opening hours are notoriously fickle, restaurants and rooms raise prices or lower standards. If you feel we've got it wrong or left something out, we'd like to know, and if you can remember the address, the price, the phone number, so much the better.

We'll credit all contributions, and send a copy of the next edition (or any other DIRECTIONS guide or Rough Guide if you prefer) for the best letters. Everyone who writes to us and isn't already a subscriber will receive a copy of our full-colour thrice-yearly newsletter. Please mark letters: "**Prague DIRECTIONS Update**" and send to: Rough Guides, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, or Rough Guides, 4th Floor, 345 Hudson St, New York, NY 10014. Or send an email to **mail@roughguides.com**

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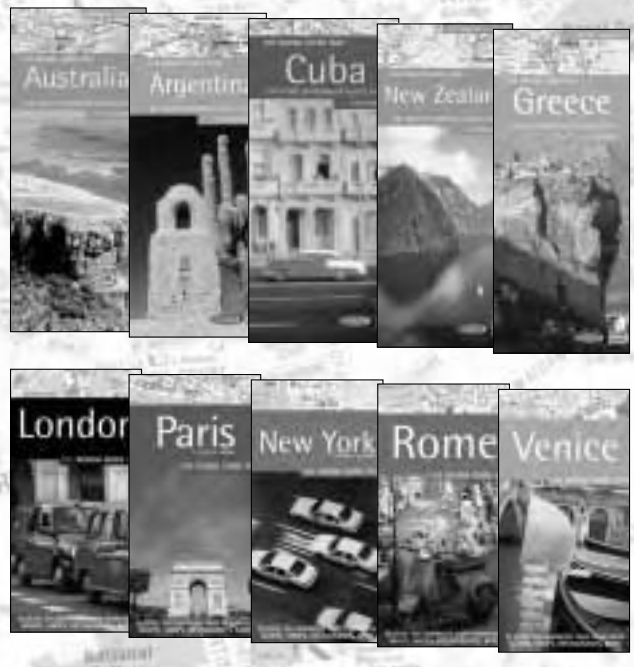

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Valdštejnská zahrada
Valdštejn Palace
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Vojanovy sady
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Lobkovický palác (German Embassy)
Schönbornský palác (US Embassy)
Vrtbovská zahrada
Schönbornská zahrada
Panna Maria Vítězná
Panna Maria pod řetězem
Karlův most (Charles Bridge)
Rudolfinum
Old Jewish Cemetery
Klementinum
Staré Město Town Hall
New Town Hall
Týn Church
Convent of Sv Anežka
sv Kliment
sv Petr
Kotva
sv Jakub
Obecní dům
U hybernů
Banka legií
Masarykovo nádraží
Powder Tower
Museum of Communism
Estates Theatre
Jubilee Synagogue
Mucha Museum
sv Jindřich
U Dörflerů
Wax Museum
Bethlehem Chapel
sv Martin ve zdi
Palác Adria
Panna Maria Sněžná
Tesco
Hlavní nádraží
Praha hlavní nádraží
Státní opera
Radio Free Europe
National Museum
Museum Kampa
Seminářská zahrada
Rozhledna
Mirror Maze
sv. Vavřinec
Funicular (lanová dráha)
Nebozizek
Hradova zed
Štefánikova hvězdárna
K.H. Mácha
sv Jan Křtitel Na Prádle
Střelecký ostrov
Slovanský ostrov
Dětský ostrov
Čertovka
Kampa
National Theatre
Nová scéna
sv Voršila
Goethe Institut
Diamant
Nové Město Town Hall
Hlahol
Mánes
Pošta
Wooden Church
Kinského zahrada
Kinského nám.
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Újezd
Malostranské nábřeží
Smetanovo nábřeží
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Náměstí Curieových
Čechův most
Štefánikův most
Revoluční
Hradební
Dlouhá
Dušní
Bílková
Maiselova
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Pařížská
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Senovážné nám.
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Staroměstská
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Husova
Michalská
Jilská
Rytířská
Provaznická
Na Příkopě
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Uhelný trh
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Jungmannovo nám.
Na Perštýně
Národní
Národní třída
Mikulandská
Voršilská
Ostrovní
V Jirchářích
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sv Longin
Hálkova
Navrátilova
Řeznická
Školská
Ve Smečkách
Křakovská
Mezibranská
Legerova
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Anglická
Žitná
Na Zderaze
Na Zbořenci
Myslíkova
Opatovická
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Lazarská
Nové Město
Malá Strana
Staré Město
Josefov
Smíchov
Karlovo náměstí
sv Ignác
Vila Amerika (Dvořák Museum)
U kalicha
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Rumunská
Londýnská
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Sokolovská
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Most Legií
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Hradčanské nám.
Zámecké schody
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Na Ořechovce
Nad Hradním vodojemem
Na Baních
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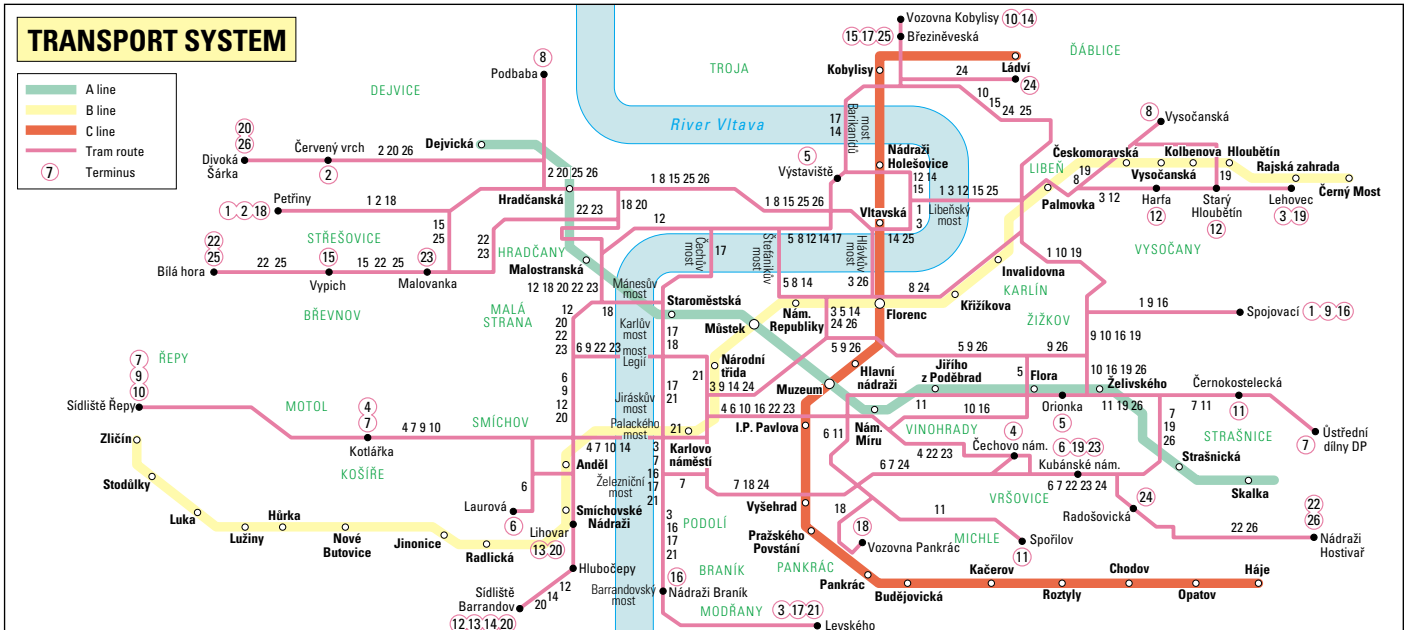
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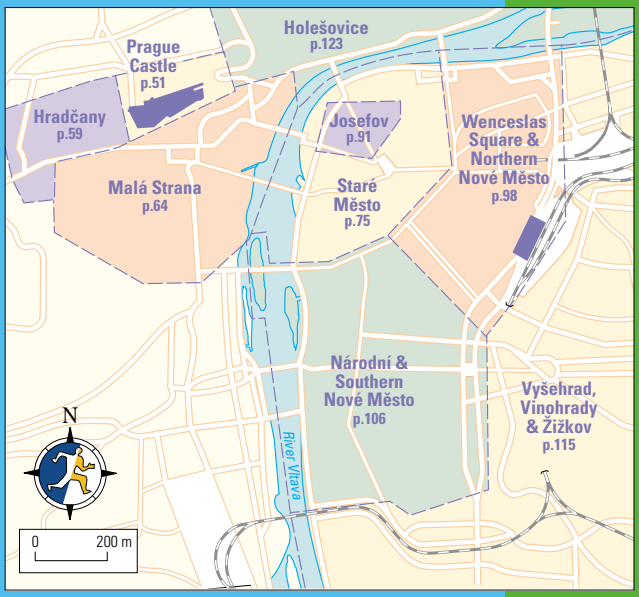

Useful stuff

Basic info

Banks Generally open Mon–Fri 8am–5pm.

Currency The Czech crown or Koruna česká (Kč or CZK). £1 = 50Kč; €1 = 30Kč; $1 = 25Kč.

Emergency numbers Ambulance ⓣ155; Police ⓣ158; Fire ⓣ150.

IDD country code ⓣ420.

International directory enquiries ⓣ1181.

Post office The main post office (pošta) is at Jindřišská 14 (daily 7am–8pm).

Time zone Central European Time (CET), one hour ahead of GMT and six hours ahead of EST, with the clocks going forward in spring and back again in autumn.

Tourist offices Na příkopě 20 & Staroměstské náme*stí 1 (ⓣ12444).

Transport fares 8Kč for 15min journey; 12Kč for up to an hour; 100Kč for a 24-hour pass.

Handy phrases

Czech words are always stressed on the first syllable

Excuse me – prosím
Sorry – pardon
Thank you – děkuju
Hello/goodbye (informal) – ahoj
Hello (formal) – dobrýden
Goodbye (formal) – na shledanou
Good evening – dobrý večer
Good night (when leaving) – dobrou noc
Do you speak English? – mluvíte anglicky?

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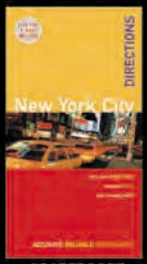

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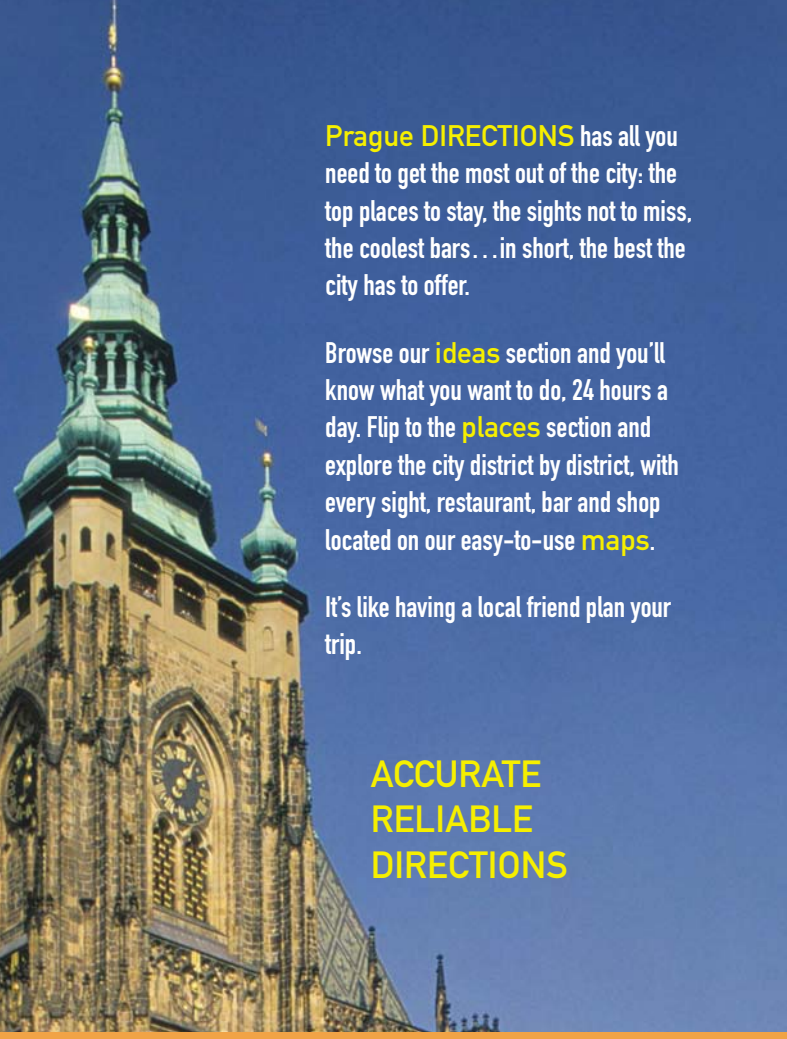

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